

QUANTA

1984 to 2009

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QL2S
is



SILVER JUBILEE MAGAZINE

Information on the Association

Membership of QUANTA, the independent QL user group, is by annual subscription. The Membership Secretary can supply full details. Copies of the association's constitution & annual accounts are available from the Secretary. There is an extensive software library. There are active national subgroups. Details are given in the Member's Guide and in this magazine.

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We are delighted to welcome you to this the Special Souvenir Issue of QUANTA which marks both the Silver Jubilee of the “QL Users and Tinkerers’ Association”, and 25 years since the launch of the QL.

We hope that you will find the content of some interest as you take a brief walk through the history of the Sinclair QL Computer.

In 1981 IBM launched a Personal Computer (PC) and made its full specification available to all with the intent of making it easy to exchange data between all computers. Other computer manufacturers did not see it quite that way and sought to continue the mainframe practice of corralling customers by deliberately making their products not fully compatible with IBM’s PC until the late 1980’s. It cost over £2,000 - too pricey for enthusiasts.

Launched in 1984 the Sinclair QL was aptly described as being a ‘Quantum Leap’, and so it was when compared to other contemporary micro-computers – a very good interpreted SuperBASIC, the PSION Suite - Quill, Abacus, Archive and Easel - all included. It blossomed at a pace that even Sinclair could not have foreseen!

Perceived shortfalls such as micro-cartridges for data storage rather than floppy disk drives, and the need for more RAM (Sandy SuperQBoard, Expanderam, Trump, Gold and Super Gold Cards) were quickly addressed by third party suppliers.

Hardware (QXL cards in PCs) and software (Atari, QPC and Qlay) emulations appeared with the ultimate hardware emulation being the Q40 and Q60 computers. The Aurora Graphics card was developed to provide a full range of colours and a replacement (smaller) Mother Board while maintaining most of the original features of the QL.

Equally so third party programmers, both professional and private, quickly provided a wide range of additional applications. TURBO, a BASIC compiler appeared and allowed programs to run much faster.

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Both QL Today, and QUANTA magazines have been affected by substantial increases in postal charges and the introduction of large letter postal rates. QUANTA has addressed this by maintaining an A5 format, keeping the weight of an issue below 100 grams and offering the option of receiving it by email. QL Today, presently using an A4 format, are in the process of reviewing the situation but have yet to reach a decision.

The number of QUANTA Sub-Groups has reduced considerably but they continue to provide local meeting places where members may get and give HELP and swap QL news.

Various Prophets of Doom have forecast, from time to time, the demise of the QL. So far their prognoses have proved to be premature. That is not to say that such a day will not come.

Whence the QL now?

The number of QL users has reduced to a level at which it is no longer economic to produce new hardware.

The problem of communicating with modern printers has been solved, within QPC2 at least, with QPCPrint.

Software emulation on a PC either QPC for a Windows OS or QPC together with WINE for a Linux OS is going from strength to strength. The hardware being used has progressed from desktops to laptops, and now onto the recently appearing mini-notebooks running under either Windows or Linux OSs.

Since many Qlers prefer to have a separate computer for their QL activities, separate that is from their work horse PC, the current developments in the field of mini-notebooks may well be a suitable platform for the QL of the future using one of the many QL emulators available and a couple of these mini-notebooks are reviewed in the following pages.

We'll just have to wait and see!

Quanta BEGINNINGS

INVITATION

Sinclair Research Limited started the ball rolling with the following invitation in January 1984.



Sinclair Research
London

Limited INVITATION

January 1984

I have great pleasure in inviting you to attend a press conference, given by Clive Sinclair and Nigel Searle on Thursday 12 January, to launch Sinclair Research's new micro-computer.

It will take place in the Ballroom at the Hotel Inter-Continental, Hamilton Place, (off Park Lane), W1, starting at 10.30 prompt and be followed at approximately 11.45 by a detailed technical demonstration and discussion for those who wish to remain.

You are also very welcome to join us beforehand for breakfast which will be available from 9.30.

On arrival, please use the Ballroom entrance.

I apologise for the short notice and do hope that you, or your representative, will be able to attend. It would be most helpful if you would RSVP either by returning the enclosed reply-paid card or by 'phoning.

PLEASE NOTE: The information contained in this invitation is confidential! and EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 am JANUARY 12.

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Even before the first QLs had been dispatched to users, IQLUG - The Independent QL User's Group (later to be renamed QUANTA) was formed and its' first newsletter (then called Quanta) started with the following editorial:-

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Quanta, the newsletter of IQLUG, the Independent QL Users' Group.

Since we wanted to get the group going as soon as possible, I have written this first issue myself. This is YOUR newsletter, to be written by YOU, the members of the Group.

My policy will be to publish everything that is sent in, be it good, bad, or indifferent (to coin a phrase), provided that it is not libellous, defamatory, or obscene.

Even if you do not feel like writing anything, let me have your requests for the type of articles you would like to see in Quanta. I will publish these requests, and hopefully, someone will come up with the goods.

Also write in or 'phone if you are having problems with your system. I will be including a Problem Section in future issues.

Complimentary copies of Quanta will be going to Sir Clive Sinclair and Mr. Nigel Searle of Sinclair Research Ltd., PSION, the Amateur Computer Club, PCW, BYTE, Sinclair User and the Amateur Computer Club of New Jersey (USA). That way we preserve our independence, and make sure that the people that matter know of our existence.

Please have a look at the proposed Constitution and let me have your views. It is based upon that of the Amateur Computer Club. We will be having it looked over by a solicitor, to make sure that there are no loopholes. If any of you are legally qualified perhaps you could let me know what you think of it.

As soon as is practicable we intend to organise a workshop. combined with an inaugural General Meeting. We will then be able to hold a formal election for officers of the Group, and get the Constitution accepted. In the mean time, Brian Pain and I will run things. We will be standing for election at the inaugural meeting.

You might like a bit of information about Brian and myself. Brian lectures in accountancy at a College of Higher Education, and I work for myself as a consultant. We formed what is now the National TRS-80 and Genie Users Group some five years ago, and thought that we would organise something along the same lines when the QL came along. I have quite a lot of experience of the 68000 and 68008, as I have a couple of 'home-made' small systems using these processors. I have a 68000 cross-assembler running on one of my other systems, which enables me to write 68000 code and run it on the 68000 or 68008.

I hope you like IQLUG.

Leon Heller

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www.rwapsoftware.co.uk

www.rwapadventures.com

RWAP Software provide a wide range of software and hardware for the Sinclair QL, Cambridge Z88 and ZX Spectrum computers and continue to support and promote the Sinclair community well into the future.

As well as a wide range of software products (adventures, games, utilities, business software and a route finder), we also supply the SBASIC/SuperBASIC Reference Manual and a wide range of second hand hardware, software and books (from books on Quill through to Super Gold Cards).

We have now reached an agreement with TF Services to offer their wide range of spares to keep you going.

Examples of some of our stock:

Return to Eden (Text & Graphics Adventure) £10

Q-Word (Full colour word based game) £20

QL Genealogist (Genealogy Program) £20

SBASIC / SuperBASIC Reference Manual on CD ROM £20

We have a wide range of other software, both new and second hand, and can help you migrate to floppy disks also.

New Sinclair QL Keyboard Membranes £20

Replacement Sinclair QL Case Tops £8

Replacement QL Chips from £4

New Sinclair QL PSU £9

Transform Microdrive Storage Box £2

Disk Interfaces from £15

10 x 3.5" DSDD Disks £10

A whole host of other spare parts and services to keep your QL in top condition

Plus Lots of similar items for the Cambridge Z88 and ZX Spectrum !!

- Visit our web sites or get in touch to let us know what you need and we will see if we can help!

Whilst the QL did not find its way into the hands of users until later in 1984, 12th January of that year was the date when Sinclair invited journalists to a high profile launch event at the Intercontinental Hotel, Hamilton Place, in London.



The Intercontinental Hotel in London, site of the launch.

This was actually 12 days before the launch of the Apple Mac computer! In fact, from the letter of invitation we can pin down even the time to 10:30 AM. The letter even states that news of the launch is embargoed until shortly after the commencement of the launch (11.00 AM).



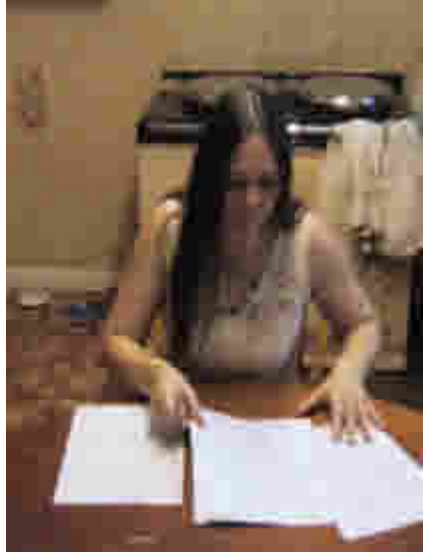
Clive Sinclair proudly shows a QL

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Members of the team behind the QL included hardware designer David Karlin, QDOS operating system designer Tony Tebby, SuperBASIC author Jan Jones and Linus Torvalds from Finland. Linus was one of the most famous people associated with the QL in those early days and eventually went on to be associated with the Linux operating system!



David Karlin



Jan Jones



Tony Tebby



Linus Torvalds

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Urs Koenig in Switzerland has made a little PowerPoint presentation to celebrate the 25th anniversary – point your browser at:

<http://www.cowo.ch/downloads/SinclairQLis25-compressed.ppt>

And so, after 25 years of the QL, QUANTA will have our own little celebration at the Allesley Hotel near Coventry, England on the 18th and 19th of April 2009. We hope to see you all there!



The Allesley Hotel, Coventry.

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21ST APRIL 2009

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All Contributions are Welcome.

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Copy by Email to - editor@quanta.org.uk

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Q U A N T A



Independent QL Users Group

World-wide Membership is by subscription only,

Offering the following benefits:
Bimonthly Magazine - up to 52 pages
Massive Software Library - All Free!
Free Helpline and Workshops
Regional Sub-Groups. One near you?
Advice on Software and Hardware problems
Subscription just £14 for Full Membership

PayPal (see QUANTA Web Site),
Cash, Cheques and Postal Orders Accepted

Now in our Twenty Sixth Year

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<http://www.quanta.org.uk>

NEXT QUANTA SPONSORED EVENT

The QUANTA SILVER JUBILEE & "QL is 25" 2-day Workshop

And the 25th QUANTA Annual General Meeting

Will be held at:

The Allesley Hotel, Coventry, England. CV5 9GP

On Saturday April 18th and Sunday April 19th 2009

The AGM will be held at 2.00 pm. On Sunday

All enquiries to Sarah Gilpin

Secretary@quanta.org.uk

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REMINISCENCES

UPS AND DOWNS OF THE LAST 25 YEARS

By

Dilwyn Jones (Librarian, Helpline and News Reporter)

Now that QUANTA and the QL are both celebrating their silver jubilee anniversary, I thought I'd get a bit nostalgic and cast my eye back to my younger days and look back at how I got involved with Sinclair computers, and take a quick look at the highs and lows of those 25 years as I see them.

My Sinclair collection started as a teenager with a Sinclair Oxford 300 calculator and a Sinclair Black Watch (yes, I had one of the ones which actually seemed to work, despite the house having a nylon carpet at the time!). I'd seen articles in magazines as a teenager about older Sinclair products like the matchbox radio, amplifiers and so on, but the calculator and watch were the original inspirations and the only two of those pre-computer products I actually owned.

Back in 1980 sometime I saw an advert for a ZX80. It was the early days of wondering if I should learn something about computers? Little was I to know...



ZX80



ZX81

Well, for a start I fell ill, so the purchase got delayed. By the time I came home from hospital it was the ZX81 which I actually received. Great fun, it helped me pass the time while recuperating. A little later, Spectrums came on the scene and a whole new hobby had gripped me. I wrote some books about them with the help of the late Tim Hartnell of Interface Publications and made enough money to pay a deposit on a house. Which was soon full of computers and computer magazines.

We wondered what Clive had up his sleeve next. Then in early 1984 he announced the QL, just before the world was to learn of Ataris and Macs. I ordered one as soon as I was able to and waited. And waited. And waited.

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Then when it came it was so incomplete part of it hung out the back in a “dongle” and there couldn’t have been more bugs if a housefly had nested in it. Oh boy, was this what we’d waited so long for, and what we’d paid £399 for? And £4.95 for a single microdrive cartridge? How technology marches on – now you can buy CDs and DVDs and floppy disks for well under a pound each!

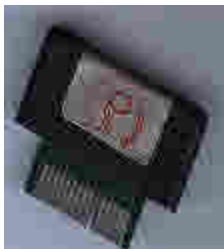
Fortunately, it was all sorted out in a few weeks and I had my first truly working QL, with a version JM ROM. I got a little frustrated it wouldn’t read my Spectrum microdrive files, but was soon up and running, typing in programs from the user guide and early magazine listings and spending many a happy hour fixing my typing mistakes or the listings (or both). I got an Epson FX80 with a built-in serial interface card as a printer – well, I had to use Sinclair’s “free” serial printer lead for something didn’t I?

I enjoyed all the early QL magazines I could find – QLUB newsletter, QL World, QL User and the odd copy of Sinclair User which catered for both Spectrum and QL. I soaked up all the information I could about the QL and soon my Spectrum was being used less and less as the QL became more and more a part of my life.

I joined IQLUG (as QUANTA was then known) at some point in 1984 and wasn’t to know then that 25 years later I’d not only still be a QL user and a QUANTA member, but spending the Silver Jubilee on the committee gathering news, operating the Helpline and administering the software library (you think that’s a lot – you should see how much John Gilpin has been doing!). At the time I was amazed by how many people had joined up, how many bothered to write every month for the newsletter and the number of programs the library was starting to amass!



A CST QDisc interface



A Toolkit 2 EPROM cartridge



Qubide interface

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I even joined SUB (the Super User Bureau) and received a few newsletters, bought a few things from them and used their Helpline a little, until they eventually disappeared.

Eventually I decided to get a floppy disk system and when I saw the problems which had arisen with the promising Medic system, I avoided that and went for a Q-Disk interface from CST and a 256K RAM card – I think it was a Simplex or Sandy unit – before later getting a Sandy 512K RAM card. I bought a dual 5.25 inch disk system from Watford Electronics – these drives were initially shared with a BBC micro I also had at the time, but didn't use that much apart from writing small BBC Basic programs for use at work. The 5.25 inch disks were truly "floppy" – just like a couple of sheets of cardboard. I still wonder if it's true that in those days people posted floppy disks with "Fragile – Do Not Bend" written on the envelope and people found them folded through their letterboxes allegedly with postmen writing on them "Oh yes, they do!"

My first serious software purchases were Psion Chess and the first QL Basic compiler, Supercharge (later superseded by Turbo). Somewhere along the line I also bought a Toolkit 2 EPROM from Care Electronics (which I still have somewhere). I also bought a copy of QRAM but never got to grips with it before it was superseded by QPac1 and QPac2 and it's still in the attic somewhere, pretty unused.

My QL then acquired a QIMI mouse interface from Tony Tebby at QJump. Because I never really got to grips with QRAM at that time, the QIMI mouse was to remain largely unused for a time, until I got QPac 2. So I got a cursor-emulating Smiling Mouse system and happily used that for a time.

My first major programming job using Supercharge was Page Designer 1, which is still in the QUANTA library to this day. I later bought Turbo and QLiberator and used both to create compiled programs as programming was now my major use for the QL, along with word processing. I got hold of two books by Andy Pennell which helped me learn Assembler programming. Most of my recent programming projects have used the excellent Easypr and Menu Extension systems to simplify production of pointer driven programs.

The first QUANTA workshop I attended was in Swindon in 1988. I think it was at this AGM that the founder members of the committee, Leon Heller and Brian Pain, were overthrown after a very public spat with members at the AGM over (I hope my memory is right here!) family members being employed to do work such as preparing and posting newsletters and

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envelopes and such tasks. Apart from Sinclair selling out to Amstrad, this was one of my first low points – being present at such a public disagreement. I guess members have the right (and are probably duty bound) to raise issues like this when they become a public concern with an organisation like QUANTA, but I still found it to be a very sad end to the workshop.

On a brighter note, it was here at this event that I first met David Batty of Sector Software, who was to publish my first commercial QL software, Page Designer 2. David published a few of my early programs and he still turns up at workshops from time to time. QUANTA workshops have done so much to keep the QL going over the years, by letting users meet the traders and each other and immerse ourselves in QLing for a whole day or weekend.

We all remember how Sinclair sold the computer business to Amstrad, who immediately ditched the QL. That was a real low point, although efforts were made by a consortium of traders to see what could be salvaged and various machines were proposed, but in the end nothing much became of all the ideas.

Another low point was the disappearance of the QL magazines. QL World and QL User merged and were later moved to the Arcwind publishing stable, still under the editorship of Helen Armstrong. Sadly, QL World eventually disappeared and the QL publishing mantle was taken on by Bob Dyl in the USA with International QL Report (IQLR). Other QL magazines at the time had included QL Technical Review, QL Adventurers Forum (later QL Leisure Review) and QReview (which later merged with IQLR). IQLR eventually ceased publication and QL Today magazine took over, which is still going today, the only QL-dedicated magazine apart from QUANTA.

In terms of hardware, the first of the high points as far as I have been concerned have been the appearance of the first disk interfaces. Oh that the QL had been launched with a floppy disk drive – the QL hardware designer David Karlin said in a recent Personal Computer World interview that he “would have preferred to use a floppy drive but it would have put costs up too much” – or so he thought at the time. He went on to suggest that had Clive been as successful in negotiating with the drive manufacturers as Alan Sugar of Amstrad was, the QL could well have been different.

The next huge step for me was the appearance of the Gold Card and Qubide interfaces. The Gold Card signalled a move away from the original 68008 processor and took the QL past 1MB of RAM, while the Qubide IDE interface allowed many of us to add our first QL hard disk. It was not the first

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hard disk system by any means, but it was probably the one most widely used on the QL.

Add-on QL-compatible cards saw many QLers take up other operating systems. In particular, the QXL card from Miracle Systems helped us get used to DOS and Windows alongside SMSQ, while the ST-QL emulator helped many use an Atari ST and QDOS alongside each other and pointed the way towards an emulator-based future for QLs. As our Chairman said in the QUANTA February/March 2009 issue, “QLing using emulators continues to appear to be the best way forward.”

Hardware-based QL compatible systems have always been available, from QL circuit board based machines like the Thor and Sandy QXT-640, while the Aurora board gave us an improved QL circuit board you could build into a system of your choice. My Aurora was built into a Minis-QL system along with a Super Gold Card, Qubide and a ROMDisq flash memory card, which was quite a step forward for me. Advanced QL systems have been available too, from the Thor XVI in the early days and more recently the Q40 and Q60 computers.

The low points have invariably been the end of hardware manufacturers like Miracle Systems who always managed to live up to their name with wonderful products for the QL over the years, from little Miracles like the serial to parallel converter for printers, Trump Cards, Midi box, Gold and Super Gold Cards and of course the QXL. It was rather sad that some of Miracle’s pre-announced products like the enhanced graphics card for the QL (“Masterpiece”) and the PC bridge card for plugging in a Super Gold Card never really got anywhere. And the disappointment of promising systems, like Nasta’s Coldfire project, never finally seeing the light of day.



A Super Gold Card

And



The QXL card

Both these products were produced by Miracle Systems.

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In contrast, the emulators scene continues to thrive, with QL emulators for all sorts of systems available and actively being developed and supported. QL2K (developed from the original QLay emulator) has become a capable if basic QDOS system for Windows, while QemuLator is the only emulator giving us the choice of using QDOS or SMSQ/E. QPC2 is probably the most widely used Windows QL emulator and the only one exclusively using SMSQ/E.

uQLx was originally a Linux-based emulator from Richard Zidlicky, later developed for Windows platforms by Peter Graf and a Mac version by James Weatherly. QemuLator has Windows and Mac version. QDOS Classic is available for both Amiga and Q40/Q60 computers. An interesting twist was the Q40 Linux system, letting a QL compatible system run Linux applications instead of the other way around. Of course, Digital Precision's Solution and Conqueror systems let QLers run DOS applications well before that.

I can't finish this article without mentioning Tony Tebby. He was responsible for writing QDOS (along with Jan Jones who wrote the SuperBASIC interpreter) when the original operating system which was to be called 68k/OS was dropped before the launch of the QL. Tony Tebby was a major figure throughout the life of the QL, originally with his company QJump after he left Sinclair Research, then in developing applications, drivers and eventually the SMSQ/E development of our beloved operating system. Now retired from the QL scene, he has been a huge influence and driving force for the QL over the years.

For me, SMSQ/E was a huge step forward. It let us break the bounds of the original QL ROMs (the Minerva QDOS-compatible ROM had also achieved that to a lesser extent) and brought us the much enhanced SBASIC, a sneak preview of which had already been given in the SMSQ (SMSQ/E without the pointer environment enhancements) of the QXL card.

Probably the single most influential development in recent years apart from hardware and emulators has been the ql-users email mailing list, which has let QLers worldwide kept in touch, share information and discuss all matters pertaining to the QL pretty much in real time to take advantage of the convenience of modern communications, along with all the QL web sites which have sprung up over the years.

So, yes, there have been many major high points and thankfully fewer low points during the journey to our Silver Jubilee. I sincerely hope that QUANTA, QDOS and SMSQ/E and the entire QL scene will continue for many years yet!

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COMPUTING FOR RATHER MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS

By
JOHN MASON (Chairman & Co Editor)

In 1943 I was invited to sip sherry with a Fellow of my College. He chatted about “Electrical Programmable Computers”, the mathematical theory of computers, and the use of computers to decode intercepted enemy signals. That phrase and all of this were classified “TOP SECRET”.

In 1946 I transferred to Military Survey (the Father and Mother of Ordnance Survey) where I learnt to carry out traverses and triangulations. The calculations were done using - by hand 7 figure logs or with Brunsviga and Facit single cylinder calculating machines with 10 figure natural trig tables.

Back in “Civvy Street” 1949 found me carrying out an O & D Survey to determine the need for a Town Centre Ring Road for Ilford. To analyse the 25,000 registration marks observed I looked for a firm with a computer but finding none had to use Hollerith cards.

Seven years later I did a second O & D Survey for Romford Town Centre. Once more I could not find a computer bureau to analyse the data and had to resort to Hollerith cards

Then in the early 1960's the Motorway programme commenced and the County Surveyors' Association devised a program called MOSS. Highly portable, written in Fortran, it used 3D strings to define the positions of carriageway centre lines, kerb lines etc. A licence cost £5,000. In addition to being mounted on County Councils' mainframe computers it was also available at SIA - a Computer Bureau in Victoria, London. I used it in the design of a Town Centre Ring Road for Romford.

1964 saw the setting up of the Romford Educational Computer Trust by Ford and other major local companies. This resulted in the installation in 1965 at the Royal Liberty School, Romford, of an Elliott 803 mini-computer.

I was one of those who helped to set it up. It looked like a welsh dresser with 18 lights and 18 switches underneath them together with a

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large ENTER button. It was an 18 Bit word machine with all of 8 KB of RAM. It was programmable in Machine Code or Algol. The principal means of Input and Output were a High Speed Tape Reader, and a High Speed Tape Punch. In addition to teaching computing I had use of the Elliot to develop Engineering applications.

In 1968 I acquired for the Drawing Office an ASR33 Teletype and a 300 Baud Acoustic Coupler which was used with a dial-up line to access SIA's computer. Quite an advance but every time somebody opened the door the pressure change crashed the connection. Things improved greatly in 1970 when it was upgraded to a 2400 baud modem and a Private Telephone line to SIA. (All very slow by today's standards)

Mini computers started to appear, the political climate changed, and in 1979 I was given authority to purchase a DEC PDP 11-03 LSI Mini computer for the Borough Surveyor's Office, London Borough of Havering at a cost £14,000. With both an in-house facility and ongoing access to SIA it was a great advance.

Over the next five years programs were written, tested and implemented for reducing and plotting Land Surveys, Foul and Surface Sewer design, Traffic Engineering including analysing O & D Surveys and setting Traffic Lights, Highway Design, Structural Design including Multi-Dimensional Frames in Steel or Concrete, Concrete Cooling Towers, Bills of Quantities, Contract Measurement, Staff Costing, and Office Administration.

Whilst all this was going on in 1980 a Honeywell Mainframe computer was purchased, primarily for the Borough Treasurer's use. Concurrent with its installation a policy of buying only Honeywell computers was adopted. They proved to be poorly suited to non-financial uses, and the general introduction of computer aided working stagnated until the policy was reversed in 1986. By then IBM compatible PC's had become really compatible with one another.

In 1981 I started looking for a truly portable computer for myself. I saw nothing that matched my needs. The BBC micro was launched but demand greatly exceeded supply. I waited, it became available off the shelf, and halved in price. I bought a BBC B, and I had a microcomputer that I could carry in my car for use as I moved around sites.

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The QL appeared. I liked it, and the PSION software. Again I waited. Fortran was ported to it. I bought one. The rest is history. As memory expansions, floppy disk drives, Gold and Super Gold cards appeared I upgraded.

I moved to Highcliffe in 1990 and joined the Highcliffe Community Association. In 1991 they set up a Computer Section, and I was elected Chairman. In response to demand for Word Processing and Spreadsheet classes 4 QLs with monitors were bought. I spent the next 2 years happily teaching Quill and Abacus, also developing an admin system on the QLs.

In 1992 at a Clevedon Workshop I bought, as a second system, a QXL card and a second user Amstrad Alt-286 PC.

PCs became very cheap, HCA Computer Section went for them. The advent of the QPC software QL emulator enabled me to carry on QLing with a PC as my third QL system.

Most recently I have acquired as my fourth system an Acer Aspire One mini-notebook. My challenge now is to implement QPC 2 under Linux.

NOSTALGIC DEFINITIONS

- **A Hard Drive** 4 hours spent in a motorway traffic jam
- **A Mouse** A small rodent that ate your cheese
- **A Mobile** A decoration hanging above the baby's cot
- **The Web** Home to spiders
- **A Directory** The phone book
- **Search Engine** What you did with a broken down car
- **QDOS** Was spelt "Kudos", meant praise, fame etc.
- **Gold Card** Rich man's Credit Card
- **RAM** A Male Sheep
- **512 K RAM** Overweight Male Sheep!
- **A 3.5 inch Floppy** Ooh, Betty - better not go there!!
- **Memory** Way of recalling things to mind

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QL Today QL Today QL Today QL Today QL Today

QL Today is now in its thirteenth successful year. It has established a reputation as the definite source of up-to-date news and information on QDOS/SMSQ systems. We have had many free cover disks and CDs featuring loads of software and articles on everything from the latest hardware projects to show repairs. Every issue contains an average of 50 to 60 pages DIN A4 - jam-packed with information, articles, reviews and more! We are working on Issue 3 of the current volume - it will be ready by the middle of March, as scheduled. Looking at the material we have now, 6 weeks before the release date, we can say that it will be another very interesting issue.

You can join QL Today at any time, even in the middle of a volume. You will get the issues already published from this volume, and, of course, all forthcoming issues of this volume as scheduled.

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Quanta REMINISCENCES

By
Sarah Gilpin (Secretary)

My computer experiences started in the early 1980s when John bought a Sinclair ZX81. While I was making tea he was teaching our children and himself basic programming, procedures and computer syntax. I found that I was lost in all this as I kept missing bits and the standard answer to my questions was “I have already explained that!” So I basically gave up trying to learn about programming, but I can remember reciting machine code as if it was Hiawatha to proof-read new procedures.

The family advanced to a Spectrum and I found that my role was to draw maps of Adventure games to help my children. If I look around I might even be able to find some of the original maps. By this time my children had far outstripped me in computer know how, both from using home computers and from learning at school.

We bought a QL from Dixon’s to help with our sheet metal business accounts and quotations. I became a “user” while John continued to be a “tinkerer”. Over the years my role in “tinkering” changed to new programme “wrecker” – “See if you can break this programme and/or procedure, just follow the instructions.” “Tinkering” is not the right word, perhaps “wrecking” is more appropriate. Most of this work was carried out late at night and into the early hours, a time when John is at his best and I am falling asleep. Not always a good mix for domestic harmony or good programming!

The first AGM/workshop I went to was at the Moat House in Newcastle (1989 or 1990 I think) where I met a number of enthusiastic QLers and traders for the first time. I also met the Southernns for the first time. Alison and I decided that we were fed up with just being “a member’s wife” and we suggested Associate Membership for interested wives, husbands and significant others. It took a year or two to become a reality, and there were only the two of us for many years. In 200? the number grew to 3 as Alexia Southern joined our ranks; we expect it to swell over the next few years as the two younger Southernns join QUANTA.

We were founder members of the North East Manchester QL User’s Group (NEMQLUG) which used to meet at New Moston Library,

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courtesy of Steve Papierowski. Following Steve's death we moved our centre of operations to our house in Stretford, where we still hold meetings on the last Thursday of each month.

Meanwhile we were not only using our QL's (plural) to run the office side of our company but also to write programmes for the CNC punching machine. The CNC computer had limited memory and adding a new programme was down time on production – using the QL was more efficient in many ways.

I had also become interested in Family history. My maternal Grandfather had written some history of his family's origins in Oxford while he was a student there in the 1880's. My maternal Grandmother's family had originated on Aberdeen, Scotland. My Father's family was already being researched. For a year or two everything was on paper while John worked on producing a suitable database in Archive. The database has GROWN like the Beanstalk and we now have over 20,000 names in the Morice family and 30,000 in the Good family. Our next move is to make the databases compatible with a PC, so that the information will be more readily useable by others.

Meanwhile we continued to attend workshops all over the country. John became a Committee member (Membership Secretary) then Treasurer, later combining both these jobs into one. More recently still took on joint editorship of the Magazine with John Mason. I was asked to join the Committee as Secretary, a position I have enjoyed.

At every workshop we attend we collect second hand QL equipment. We now have boxes of assorted QLs and accessories in one cellar, the main hall and part of the front (computer) room/office - used to be the dining room! Thank heavens we have a large house and luckily there are no children around all the time, only three cats. Every so often we send boxes of parts to Rich Mellor for sale (thank you for your support, Rich) and we gain new boxes from retiring members.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the company and activity of QUANTA members over the last 25 years. Despite the declining numbers I feel that QUANTA are a forward looking organisation and I will remain an active member as long as possible. Whether this will be as a continuing member of the Committee or as the organiser of workshops and AGM's held in Manchester remains to be seen. My motto is "CARRY ON QLing"

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REMINISCENCES OF THE SINCLAIR QL

By

John Gilpin (Treasurer, Membership Secretary & Co Editor)

Way back in the early eighties (when I was a mere slip of a lad of 40 ish) I had my first experience of Mail Order Shopping from the Observer Newspaper – a Sinclair ZX81 Computer. With little or no experience of computers I had to “Read the ***** Manual” before I could get anywhere, and it wasn’t long before I had “Hello” printed all over the TV screen in the lounge and I was being asked by my early teenage son George if that was all it knew how to do!! I remember telling him that the computer was capable of doing many things once I had learned how to tell it what I wanted it to do. George’s reply was something to the effect that it was all I knew how to do!! I think I dropped off the bottom of the esteem scale at that moment and the climb back was very demanding. As with all Sinclair’s electronic gadgets one is encouraged to tinker with them and the ZX was no different from anything else. It wasn’t long before I had overfilled the massive 4 Kb of memory and found a guy from Leeds who made and sold 64 Kb memory cards. I went to Leeds to buy one from him and came away with my head spinning. In hind sight I think he spoke entirely in machine code as I couldn’t understand a word of what he said!!

Time past and George and his younger brother Stuart and sister Elizabeth ganged up on me and “suggested” that a Spectrum would be a great advance on the ZX and as my brother-in-law worked for Timex at the time, a birthday present arrived in the form of an early Sinclair Spectrum which in time had a memory implant to bring it up to 48 Kb. While the kids spent their spare time playing games on the Speccy, I persevered with the ZX even trying to write some code direct in machine code – Oh, what a disaster that turned out to be. Sarah (my wife) and I seriously tried to write an adventure game in real time on a tropical isle but getting a high tide twice a day with the corresponding ebb and flow got the better of us (me really) as Sarah used to fall asleep in the middle of our planning sessions.

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Around this time, we closed down our first business and started another one. Our new partners felt that much of the day to day business work could be done on a computer and we tried in vain with two spectrums (his and ours) to sort something out. A family friend who was secretary of the church social club kept his club records on a Sinclair QL in a database (another new term for me!) and eventually he gave me his QL to help with the business side of things. As we developed our programming skills, we bought another QL and networked them together with a 20 yard length of twisted pair bell wire. I learned later that this was the best means of networking over such a distance. Although we wrote Archive programmes for stock control, quotations and quality control documentation etc, we actually bought "Cash Trader" to use as our accounts package. We even learned how to interface the RS232 board on our CNC Punching machine which meant we were able to write CNC code in the office instead of the whole machine being down for the time it took to type the programmes in. Programme modifications were much quicker too. Being involved with the local Scout movement gave us the opportunity to have carrying bags made out of tent material for our monitors and the massive cases that we made to get rid of all the spaghetti on the desktop. Even today we can be seen lugging our Monitors around in our green tent material carrying cases.

A local QUANTA subgroup was formed in New Moston in North East Manchester and Sarah and I were regular visitors to their meetings learning all sorts of new tricks – even how to strip down our keyboards and washing all the component parts in the kitchen sink to get rid of the grime from our sheet metal workshop business. Our office manager always knew when we had been to a NEMQLUG meeting 'cos the keyboard keys were clean again and the occasional key stuck down causing all sorts of CNC hiccoughs!! Membership of QUANTA has lasted up to the present day and it has been a very enjoyable time for both of us. Now that we have retired from the Sheet Metal business, our current hobby is genealogy and we have some massive Archive .dbf files as proof of that. I feel that emulators will be the way forward for the QL and finding a good, cheap platform to run them on will, I feel, be the next challenge.

Only time will tell.

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My Early Computing Experiences

By
Dan Abbott (Web Master)

My first introduction to computing came in late 1982 when I received a second hand ZX81 for Christmas.

I wrote a number of simple programs in Sinclair BASIC and began to discover that personal computing could be creative and inspiring. Who could forget the ZX printer with it's aluminium foil paper and crude spark printing method? It's amazing that one had the patience to wait seven minutes to save or load a program on a crude domestic tape recorder!

I still retain an interest in early home computers, which evolved during a period of rapid change and innovation. A quick comparison with today's PCs demonstrates how far technology has advanced in the last twenty five years. I can only admire the tenacity and ingenuity of programmers who were able to fit a chess program into 1K of memory, or a flight simulator into 16K.

During the 1980s, I graduated to the BBC Micro and Research Machines 380z which boasted 5.25 floppy drives, up to 64K of memory and a disc operating system. The Research Machines 480z and Nimbus introduced network operating systems and early Winchester hard discs.

ICL One Per Desk

The OPD was a brave attempt to combine the facilities of a personal computer, electronic office, telephone and electronic messaging. The OPD was released in 1984, more than six years before Tim Berners-Lee launched the World Wide Web. In the early 1990's, I acquired a job lot of ICL One Per Desks and joined a small band of OPD enthusiasts who were fascinated by this strange, innovative computer. We shared information and software listings through bulletin boards, PRESTEL and a primitive form of email called VT-LINK. The built in modem was only capable of 300 baud duplex or 300 / 1200 baud simplex, but this was sufficient to access PRESTEL and Tony Firshman's bulletin board.

The OPD was commercial failure, but gained cult status amongst enthusiasts. British Telecom continued to support a rebranded version of the OPD, the Merlin Tonto, until 1993.

Return to the QL and OPD scene

I returned to the QL scene in 2004, having acquired a second hand OPD and QL on eBay. Rich Mellor sold me some add on disc drives, and suggested that I join QUANTA. Within a few years, I had joined the committee and was given the task of designing the QUANTA web site.

Development of the QUANTA web site

While development on the web site has been slow, the introduction of a PayPal system for online subscription renewals and the decision to put program listings online is a move in the right direction.

I hope that the web site will continue to attract new members.

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My Days with a QL

By
Peter Baily (Member)

My most satisfying moment with a QL in its original form was to programme the reaction kinetics equations for emulsion polymerisation of vinyl acetate (to make PVA emulsion - white wood glue). These equations are quite complex and require the use of large exponents (e.g. in the Avogadro number) which (with a little manipulation of the maths) the QL could handle.

The resulting program took several hours to run (about 4 if I remember well) and successfully calculated the course of the reaction. I obtained plots of heat evolution, polymer content, monomer content etc. against time which I could print out with a screen dump together with the periodic printing of critical parameters. Later on and just for fun I transferred it to a Q40 where it runs in about 5 minutes.

The programme was later elaborated into one for co-polymerisation of vinyl acetate with ethylene to run on PCs by much more skilled programmers than I. It proved extremely useful for problem solving even on commercial scale.

I refrain from giving any programming detail on such a specialised subject but if anyone is interested they may ask me.

MORE NOSTALGIC DEFINITIONS

- **A 5 inch Floppy** Only the mind boggles!
- **A Floppy Drive** A Blue Tablet (A current source of SPAM)
- **A Bit** Mouthpiece on a horse's bridle
- **A Monitor** The school milk organiser
- **A Monitor** A large carnivorous lizard
- **A Keyboard** The fingering section of a piano
- **A Chip** A deep fried, square cut, piece of potato
- **A Nibble** What the mouse did to your cheese
- **A Byte** A mouthful

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My QLs

By

George Gwilt (Member)

Once a week I used to visit my 80 year old mother and load onto her recently acquired Sharp PC a new game I had composed on the ten minute car journey to her house. One day I decided to show her a Mandelbrot diagram the formula for which had just appeared in Scientific American. I apologised for its crude nature this being due to the fact that the Sharp computer's pixels were about 1/2 cm wide and were visible only in green. To my surprise, on my next visit, I found that my mother had bought a QL. This being 1985 or so it was obsolescent but cheap. The microdrive cartridges proved too fiddly for my mother so I took the machine home and started using it there, though I would transport it to my mother's house for the weekly visits. I remember that to get the Mandelbrot diagrams to appear at home I had to leave the QL switched on all night. Even then all you could see was a tiny square at the top of a TV screen, the monitor still being at my mother's.

Later on I retired from work. This meant that I no longer had a secretary so I had to write my own letters. The QL helped here. I also had to deal with tax returns, my wife's and my mother's as well as my own. The QL helped again. One year my wife asked me to write addresses on Christmas Card envelopes. Good old QL came to the rescue once more.

I started expanding the QL. I bought a Sandy Super Q-Board, which usefully had a parallel port for a printer. I went on acquiring bits and pieces so that now I have Trump Cards, Gold Cards, Super Gold Cards, a QXL (with floating point unit), a Q40, a Q60 and, of course, QPC2.

The programs I use for writing letters, for tax returns and address labels are Perfection and Archive. I found Perfection a big advance over Quill, which I'm afraid I never got used to. Both Perfection and Archive communicate with printers via a printer driver. Having set the drivers up for Perfection and for Archive I was able to print the output on my Epson dot matrix for years. Eventually this machine gave up and I replaced it with another dot matrix printer. This required only small changes in the driver, but the printer only lasted a year or two before it too gave up. At this stage, I thought I might have to start using a Windows PC or an Apple. However, Marcel Kilgus came to the rescue by writing QPCPrint. This, miraculously, allows my printing to occur on whatever printer I care to attach to my PC, through both Perfection and Archive.

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MEMORIES FROM A PREVIOUS CENTURY

By
Alex Wells (Member)

The Conversions_bas program from Steve Poole reminded me of a computing episode in the early 1980s, when I wanted to use 'Basic' programs on different machines. I was leading a sheltered life as an Aerodynamicist, and suddenly found I was expected to write programs to analyse wind-tunnel results on a newly arrived computer called an 'Intecolor' - a very expensive professional machine which I thought might have similar capabilities to a Sinclair Spectrum. The Intecolor came with a fat manual which was a masterpiece of un-intelligibility.

Among many strange details the manual listed the functions LEFT\$, MID\$ and RIGHT\$ which Steve Poole has thoughtfully written for the QL. Together with other mysterious keywords and functions given in the manual [including print formats and paragraphs which may have been intended to describe the sampling of raw data], I decided I needed to play with such things - they might be useful!

I invested in a Sinclair Spectrum at home and found that I could understand its manual, and relate its contents to my distant memories of courses in writing Fortran. Progress suddenly became possible on the Intecolor, and with help from the Spectrum and the Electronics lab, we were able to grab data from the wind-tunnel, process the results, save them locally [big floppies], and send them on our internal network.

A problem that affected both machines was that the programs became too big. It is amazing how much space can be saved by multiple statement lines [4 bytes per line-number removed] and how many bits of unexpected behaviour arose on each machine.

My periods of worship in various 'Temples of the High Winds' came to an end, and the Spectrum was replaced with a QL when they were being sold for 40 GBP. The point of all this is that the QL and its manual soon became my favourite home computer, developing the Spectrum traditions of easy use and accessibility. QPC is now the current [and portable] 'machine' and often rescues me when I cannot be bothered to check Perl and other syntax on the Linux terminal.

Of course, no one ever admits they read the manual - but sometimes a manual helps when one has 'unexpected' results or 'undefined behaviour'. I hope my next machine will do what I intend, not what I tell it - a real quantum leap.

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THE QL TODAY

ASUS EEEPC 701SD

Dilwyn Jones

There's been quite a lot of mention of ultra-portable mini-notebooks lately and a lot of discussion on which can run QL emulators and how suitable they are for computing in general. Most have Linux or Windows XP operating systems, small screens and keyboards, wireless networking, no hard disks, flash memory storage, no floppy/CD/DVD drives (unless you use external USB drives such as the £10 eBuyer floppy drive I reviewed in a recent issue of the magazine) and often slow, low powered processors. When I first heard about these devices I was sceptical, but my enthusiasm grew as more and more people described their experiences. Most people included the EeePC systems in their comments.

This little gadget has now become a staple part of my life in the few days I've owned it. I spotted it advertised as a special offer by Carphone Warehouse for just over £150 at the end of January and popped in to buy one on the way to a Quanta committee meeting.

The Asus EeePC 701 SD is a little netbook PC with a 7 inch screen. I didn't really expect it to be all that useable given that it's not much larger than a sheet of A5 paper in total, but it did come with Windows XP SP3 (OK, I

know...), it runs QPC2, it's black, it networks and it's actually got quite a lot built into its diminutive size.

I bought the black model, but it's also available in Pearl White – see the picture on right.

For me, the size and the fact it runs Windows XP was the main attraction (no need to learn Linux and install WINE), plus of course the price. I had a quick look on the web for price comparisons and



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depending on whether you get the GNU Linux version or the Windows XP version it seems to cost from £169.99 (Amazon – Linux version) up to about £220. The 701 version is the 7 inch screen version while there is also a 901, which has a 9 inch screen and is a bit more expensive (in price terms you are then getting close to a low-end laptop).

What strikes you most about this computer is the size. Technically it's 225mm wide, 160mm deep and 20mm high (front) or 32mm high (back). In other words, roughly A5 sized footprint. You can see how it compares to a standard laptop in this photo I took of this notebook sat alongside my Compaq laptop:



The Compaq laptop on the left and EeePC on the right

The small keyboard is fiddly for people with fat fingers like me, so I wouldn't do a major typing job on it if I had an alternative computer to hand. It's fine for web browsing, checking emails, routine computer use on the move and so on. The computer has an excellent little touch pad built in to control the pointer (this works in QPC2 too) with 2 buttons in front to work as left and right mouse buttons. In theory, you can slide your fingers down the edges of the touch pad to scroll, like a scroll wheel on a mouse, though I haven't yet got this to work (there's a number of options to configure the touchpad).

The specification reveals it only has 8GB of mass storage built in, along with 512MB RAM. The 8GB flash memory is expandable via either an SD card slot on the front of the right hand side and by plugging a pen drive into one of the 3 USB ports (1 left side, 2 more right side). When you first switch on, of the 8GB storage, only a little over 5GB is available to the user, the rest being taken up by the operating system and bundled software (Microsoft Works etc plus the usual Windows Notepad, Paint etc)

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You also get a free 10GB online storage for 18 months (plus extra 6 months if you register online in some countries), to make it easier to share photos online for example. I haven't tried to use this yet.

Asus can apparently supply a 30GB 1.8 inch pocket size hard disk drive which is available as a bundle deal from some suppliers. I haven't seen this – I only saw it advertised on the Asus web site.

Setting It All Up

The laptop has the usual little brick mains power supply slightly smaller than a QL one. The power supply has a removable UK 3-pin section which reveals a 2-pin mains connector. The PSU works from 100-120V and 220-240V – it is a universal type with no switches to set for the different voltages. Handy if you take the computer abroad. I took the UK part off and had great difficulty getting it back in place, so don't try this unless you really need to! The laptop has a battery of course, giving up to 3.5 hours use, although it depends on which of the 5 possible power settings is used (trade off speed against power usage).

When you first switch on the computer you run into a significant hurdle. It has an 800x480 pixel display but the "virtual" desktop can be up to 1024x768 in 16-bit or 32-bit colour. Unfortunately, the screen where you set the initial startup preferences for Windows is larger than the physical display – the [Next] button is hidden below the bottom of the screen and you can't click on it. You can press Enter or Alt N or hold the pointer near the base of the screen to scroll down if you happen to think of that but otherwise no points to Asus for presenting an obstacle at the first step. Apart from that, the setup wizard guides you painlessly through the setup, which only takes a few minutes. While this could be a major hurdle in theory since it's one of the first things to happen after first switching on, it is one of only a very few issues I had with the EeePC.

The first software I installed was an anti-virus program. I've used AVG 8 Free on this, which has worked well on other computers for me. It quickly installed itself, asked me for a few default settings then tried to update itself, which was doomed to failure as I hadn't established a web connection yet. When I did establish one, it quickly updated itself over the broadband connection.

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The EeePC has built in wireless networking (802-11b/g) and an RJ-45 8-pin LAN port (10/100Mbit). The wireless networking connected effortlessly to our Orange Livebox broadband (only after I remembered to pair up the devices first-nothing about this in the instructions) and even found two other wireless networks in range - my standard laptop only spots one of them. Having established the connection, the Internet access was basically just like using any other PC. Like many laptops, you can hold down the FN key and tap F2 to activate and deactivate the wireless connection. A short "Getting Started" document supplied with the manual walks you through the process of connecting to a wireless or cabled networking painlessly, though it didn't mention having to "pair" the device with a secured wireless router like ours. Basically, if it gets as far as asking for a password, you're there.

I ran into a little hiccup networking with the other PCs because some of them were in a workgroup called WORKGROUP and the EeePC was in MSHOME by default (this varies between Windows versions). Put them in the same workgroup name and the wireless network puts them in touch with each other so you can transfer files between shared folders and only one printer is required between all the computers if your programs allow networked printers. QPC2 supports the UNC naming convention, so it might be possible to place QPC and its qxl.win on the main computer and run it from there via the network as long as shared access is allowed, or put separate QPC2s on each computer which all tried to access the "master" qxl.win on the main machine. You could probably even configure QPC's printer ports to look for printers on other machines using the UNC names. I haven't got round to trying this yet, although the number of computers in this house means I should definitely try this at some point. Poor little wireless network doesn't know what it's in for yet!

The EeePC has no serial ports, so using SERNET to network a few QPC2s is out of the question unless you invest in a USB-Serial adaptor. Similarly, it has no parallel port for a printer, so unless you invest in a USB to Parallel adaptor like a Miracle Serial-Parallel adaptor (eBuyer, about £16) you have to rely on a USB printer or network to another printer.

I was impatient to try QPC2 on the EeePC and it all went flawlessly. I could install QPC2 on the built in storage device, or run it from a QL On A Stick. Both worked without a hitch. As I regularly use my QPC2 on a total of 3 or 4 PCs I've started keeping my QXL.WIN on a USB pen drive along with a complete copy of QPC2 which means I've got it available and up to date wherever I use it. I have yet to try to "network" the QPC2 side of things to see what fun I can get up to with that. The next step will be to try QL2K and GemuLator to make sure they work too.

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QPC2 can use a 800x480 screen if you wish to use it full screen, although I tended to prefer windowed mode of about 640x400 or so. Despite the small screen size of 7 inches (about 180mm) text size was surprisingly readable at the close range you'd use a little laptop of this size. The display is rock steady and sharp, with good solid colours and well formed characters. Obviously, the small size of the screen would mean you wouldn't use it all day without a break, I'd think you'd need to take frequent breaks to avoid eyestrain. Certainly, there has been press speculation as to whether or not a 7 inch screen is too small for proper use – I'd say a 7 inch screen display this good is probably the absolute minimum acceptable.

When I tried to set QPC to a higher resolution on a virtual desktop (e.g. 800x600) there were some hiccups scrolling the display near the edges of the screen where there was some confusion over whether the desktop scrolled, QPC2 itself scrolled, or program scroll bars scrolled. But there are so many options I could have configured it's probably only down to something I haven't quite configured correctly having only owned it for a few days.

The Manuals

There's a "quick start" leaflet plus a slim starter manual covering the basics, updating the BIOS over the web, special features (e.g. the function keys, wireless and wired networking) and the Asus-specific software. It's pretty basic, but adequately covers getting started with the machine if you are already familiar with Windows laptops. The manuals are near enough the same size as the computer, you can carry them all in the little carry case supplied with the computer.

The Specs

The processor is a 900MHz Intel Celeron, which is not fast by modern standards but both Windows and QPC2 feel quite normal on it. Browsing complex web sites can be a little sluggish, but not unacceptable. The implementation of Windows XP Service Pack 3 was an unknown quantity for me (my laptop only had SP2) but no problems were spotted with QPC2. The computer has 512MB RAM. It comes with the inbuilt 8GB flash memory storage, so is probably a little more reliable on the move than a hard disk with moving parts. It certainly feels well built, yet light weight (only 0.905 kg)

It has a fast bootup capability – startup takes only a few seconds. If only all Windoze PCs were like this!

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A stereo speaker and a microphone are built in, with sockets on the left side for external microphone and headphones/powered speakers. You can plug in a standard headset with microphone having the usual twin 3.5mm jack plugs. It even has a 0.3Mpixel camera built in along with Skype audio/video telephony software.

The display is by default 800x480, but you can right click on the desktop and go into properties menu to change the settings. The display can be rotated in steps of 90 degrees if you wish. 16-bit and 32-bit colour depths are available – QPC2 displays 16-bit colour in both modes. There is even an external 15-pin SVGA monitor connection and a browse of the monitor settings suggests a dual screen capability, which might be useful, though I haven't tried it yet – I can see a use for a system like this for presentations at Quanta workshops! The display can be set at various resolutions up to 1024x768 – if larger than the physical screen it scrolls as the pointer gets to the edge of the screen. It takes some getting used to, but it works. The sheer number of options might be bewildering to less experienced laptop users, if so, just use the default settings.

There are 3 USB 2.0 ports (also compatible with USB 1.1 of course), 2 on the right side and 1 on the left.

There's also an SD card slot so you can plug in MMC or SD flash memory cards such as those used in digital cameras and MP3 players. I was a bit puzzled how to access the slot at first, until I realised that what I thought was a cover flap was in fact a dummy SD-card shaped piece of plastic which acted as a dust cover and protector, and had to be removed to plug in a card. I have not managed to find out yet what is the maximum capacity card which can be used and whether the slot would work with a micro-SD adaptor to allow smaller mobile phone cards to be read.

It even has a little Kensington Lock slot on one side, which you can use to secure the laptop to a fixed object like a desktop using standard Kensington compatible security products. Obviously, the small size of this laptop makes it an easy device to steal and hide, but the nature of the device (ultra-portable mini notebook) probably means that this computer will be used on the move rather than left in a fixed desktop location most of the time.

You even get a Support DVD in the package, which can be used to restore the machine should anything go seriously wrong. Obviously, you would need an external USB DVD drive to do this, but they don't cost much nowadays.

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Conclusion

At this point, I lost the PC.

Ann had pinched it and was walking around the house browsing the Internet and reading her Hotmail with the PC in her hand, boasting to her friend in Liverpool about “her new computer” and how she could probably start video conversations via Skype if her friend had the necessary gear, and I had a spot of bother claiming it back from her. Let’s just say we both love this little beast and I’m sure we’ll both be using it a lot for our respective purposes. She says it will even fit in her handbag.

It’s so portable you can use it anywhere – on your lap while watching TV, reading your emails while walking around with the EeePC in your hands, in bed, even out in the garden (you can brighten or dim the display). It has a myriad of utilities and options which I haven’t even gone halfway through exploring yet. It won’t take the place of a traditional laptop for everyone, but as a second or ultra-mobile computer it’s well worth it. Purchased as a £150 special offer like this, it’s a bargain, but full priced with Windows XP its price approaches that of a traditional laptop at £200-£250. The cheaper Linux version will hold attractions for many as an ultra-portable notebook and should be able to run uQLx, or QPC2 if you use WINE.

The relatively small storage capacity is a little limiting for use as a traditional Windows computer, but the relatively small size of QL software means that if like me you just use this machine as a QPC2 machine with the bonus of Internet access and email from Windows means that even the basic configuration “out of the box” may be quite ample for your needs if used mostly as a “QL”.

It’s hard to find fault with this system. Asus have packed so much into this machine that we have still only scratched the surface after a few days. Ann has been using the Windows software and keeps finding useful little bits and pieces here and there.

I initially offered John Gilpin a page about this little wonder (the computer, not Ann) and got carried away – that’s how impressed I am.

Believe me, there’ll be some competition in this house over who gets to use this great little computer!

[Dilwyn’s “one page” article above is what makes all the difference between an ordinary Magazine and a “Bumper Issue”. Thanks Dilwyn. It sounds like a great little machine - both the Asus and Ann! - Ed]

Having read the Which Computing review of Mini-Notebooks and accepted their view that an 8.9 in screen was to be preferred to a 7 in screen since it would also give better width keys I bought, last December, their preferred choice an Acer Aspire One A150-Ab.

The Acer Aspire One comes in 5 versions ranging from a 512 MB RAM with 8GB SSD Hard Disk to a 1 GB RAM with 120 GB Hard Disk Drive, and a choice of either Linux or Windows XP as OS.

The Linux version is Linpus™ Lite v 0.5.15.3 which is based on Fedora Linux.

It has an Intel © Atom N270b 1.60 GHz processor, 3 USB2 ports, 5 in 1 card reader, Ethernet with IEEE 802.11b & g Networking, Intel © Graphics Media Accelerator 950, Stereo speakers, Wireless LAN aerial, built in microphone, 0.3 MP camera, and a 6 cell 382 5200 mAh battery.

The bundled software comprises Mozilla Firefox, and Open Office. The latter includes word processor, spreadsheet, presentation program but neither a database nor a publishing package.



It is available in 5 different case colours – Black, Blue, Brown, Pink, and White.

I chose an A150 in Sapphire Blue with 1 GB RAM (Max 1.5 GB), and 120 GB Hard Disk Drive Blue. It cost £233.91 inc VAT @ 15%

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It boots up quickly with a Home Screen offering Connect, Work, Fun, and File group options. Clearly it is designed for an absolute beginner.

In January I discovered that the battery was not holding a charge so I took it back to my supplier, Tesco, who promptly exchanged the notebook for a new one and, to my great surprise, gave me a £40 refund saying the price had gone down!

The replacement was quickly up and running. It found my local wireless network without hesitation. Access to the Internet, and browsing the Internet are both excellent.

Next step download WINE and install QPC2

THE QL AT PRESENT

Dilwyn Jones

The biggest single hurdle to the QL community at the moment is the lack of hardware development. Being realistic, although it has been a bit of an ultimate QL as far as most of us are concerned, the Q60 is probably the last major hardware development we are likely to see, it is simply too expensive to design and bring to market any significant new hardware like this as the QL community is simply not large enough to make it worthwhile.

This is not to say that individual small add-ons cannot be brought to market where there is sufficient demand. Examples might be an updated Qubide hard disk interface, a flash memory card reader, a cheap QL disk and memory interface to replace the Gold Card series (although these remain available as second user hardware) and other fairly modest-cost add-ons where it is feasible to make short production runs, possibly hand-made.

This leaves us with emulators as the way forward. Quanta Chairman John Mason alluded to this in his Chairman's Report 2008 in the February/March 2009 issue, where he said "QLing using emulators continues to appear to be the best way forward."

Fortunately, the emulators scene is quite alive and active. Many of the available QL emulators continue to get regular updates. QL emulators exist for many platforms, allowing us to use a "QL" and another system at the same time, without having more than one machine on our desktop. So I thought I'd

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take a quick look at what is available these days and any particular issues and features I feel should be mentioned.

Windows and DOS emulators

This is the best-served platform for QL emulators. You can choose between QLAY, QLAY2, QL2K, Q-emuLator, QPC2 and a version of uQLx for Windows systems, plus the rather oddly named MESS QL system.

QLay is a set of QDOS QL emulators for DOS, Windows and Linux by Jan Venema of The Netherlands. This is a freely distributable emulator with no restrictions imposed on download and usage. You can download the most recent versions from Jan's Web site:

<http://web.inter.nl.net/hcc/A.Jaw.Venema>

QLAY2 is a development of QLAY to run on Windows 2000/Windows XP systems (also seems to work on Windows 98 SE). The update is by Jimmy Montesinos. The support web site for QLAY2 is at

<http://www.jadiah.org/QL/QLay2/>

QL2K is another derivative of Qlay to run on Windows 2000/Windows XP systems. QL2K is also by Jimmy Montesinos. QL2K is a free and fully functioning QL emulator using a QDOS ROM image. The emulator is free, but you should register it (free of charge) with Jimmy Montesinos so that you can be kept informed of future developments. The support and download web site for QL2K is at <http://www.jadiah.org/QL/>. Please note that 2 versions of QL2K are available, one for 32-bit Windows systems and the other for 64-bit Windows versions.

The QLAY family, while all being free emulators, suffer from one significant shortcoming – they can't read QL floppy disks. To transfer files to and from the emulators you have to use special tools software, which is supplied – programs called qltools and qlayt. All three of the QLAY family use QDOS, you can use most QDOS ROM versions, including Minerva.

QPC1 is a QL emulator using SMSQ/E running in DOS (can be used from Windows). This version has a few limitations compared with the more recent QPC2 (such as not including the "colour drivers" or GD2 system). Support etc from Marcel Kilgus and Jochen Merz Software, both of whose Internet addresses are listed under QPC2 below. Uses SMSQ/E as the operating system.

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QPC2 is a QL emulator using SMSQ/E running on Windows 95/98/NT/XP/Vista machines. This is commercial product written by Marcel Kilgus, available from Jochen Merz Software in Germany. It needs a minimum of a 486 processor. A demo version is available - there are some restrictions on this demo version, mostly that you cannot save files to floppy or hard disk.

QPC2v3 and later supports the so-called 'colour drivers', supporting 8-bit and 16-bit colour on suitably-equipped PC systems. The proper name for the so-called colour-drivers is Graphics Driver 2 or GD2 for short. A sample QXL.WIN file system is available for the demo version of the emulator with some sample files so that you can try it out.

While QPC2 is the most expensive of the emulators to buy, it is also the one which has the most of modern day QLing bells and whistles, such as the "colour drivers" and support for the sampled sound system.

Support, availability and price details available from the following Web sites:

Author: <http://www.kilgus.net>

Publisher: <http://smsq.j-m-s.com/>

QemuLator for Windows is written by Daniele Terdina and is Shareware. The unregistered version runs only at about standard QL speed and with no more than 384K of RAM. Register it (costs 40 US dollars) and it opens up more facilities such as greater speed, more RAM, ability to handle QXL.WIN systems, TCP/IP facilities and more. The emulator can read QL floppy disks, is QDOS based (any QL ROM image) but also has the ability to run the Gold Card version of SMSQ/E and has an Aurora-style display option under SMSQ/E. This emulator manages to strike a good balance between cost and functionality, and is the only one able to give you a choice between using QDOS and SMSQ/E. Further details from the author's Web site at:

<http://www.terdina.net/ql/q-emulator.html>

win-uQLx is a port of uQLx to Windows systems by Peter Graf and Phoebus R. Dokos. I have never been able to get this emulator to run properly on my system, because of my lack of knowledge of the software system it uses, so I cannot comment on its potential usefulness. You may need something called the Cygwin distribution, a Linux-like environment for Windows. It consists of two parts. First, a DLL (cygwin1.dll) which acts as a Linux API emulation layer providing substantial Linux API functionality. And second, a collection of tools which provide Linux look and feel. Cygwin is available for most versions of Windows from www.cygwin.com

Further details and updates from <http://www.dokos-gr.net/ql/uqlx.html>

or from <http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/emu/winuqlx.zip>

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MESS, The Multiple Emulator Super System (which was discussed in Quanta June/July 2008) includes a QL emulator which runs QDOS only. MESS is based on MAME (Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator) but is geared more towards emulation of home computers and games consoles and covers a huge range of over 250 systems. MESS works on Windows platforms. The QL emulation covers a 128K or 640K QL system and includes SuperBASIC. In theory, it has microdrive image and floppy disk image devices, but I have never been able to get those working – the only way of saving I have found so far is to create “Save state” files so I can pick up where I left off, but have never been able to move files in or out of the system. If you fancy tinkering with the QL MESS, it can be downloaded free from www.mess.org

QXL

A hardware board emulating the QL on a PC was available from Miracle Systems. It was called the QXL and could be used under DOS or Windows. It originally shipped with an operating system called SMSQ, which was a cut down version of SMSQ/E (i.e. without the pointer environment). No longer in production, but available second hand. Best to get it with SMSQ/E (which can be purchased from Jochen Merz) if you can, as this gives access to enhanced facilities like access to higher colour modes than the standard SMSQ could support.

Linux emulators

uQLx is a derivative of the emulation engine used in QemuLator. uQLx is produced by Richard Zidlicky to run on Linux/Unix platforms. The sources are available for programmers who wish to tinker with recompiling the emulator. Further details from:

<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Bay/2602/>

QLay – a version of the QLay emulator from Jan Venema is available for Linux platforms as well as Windows and DOS. Further information at

<http://web.inter.nl.net/hcc/A.Jaw.Venema>

Apple Mac emulators

QemuLator Lite for Apple Macintosh is written by Daniele Terdina and is available free. There are versions for 68K Macs and for PowerMacs. Further details from the author's Web site at:

<http://www.terdina.net/ql/MacQL.html>

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uQLx for Mac OS X is a port by James Weatherley of uQLx to run on the Apple Mac OS X operating system, although it is optimised for Macs up to PowerMacs and is unlikely to work too well on more recent Intel-based Macs. Further details from

<http://www.dokos-gr.net/ql/uqlxmac.html> or

<http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/emu/uqlxmac.zip>

Amiga Systems

Two QL emulators are available for Amiga systems.

QDOS4Amiga was the first QDOS emulator for the Commodore Amiga, by Rainer Kowallik and Mark Swift. It is freeware. Up to date copies may be obtained from most Ami-Net sites, or from

<http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/emu/index.html>

QDOS Classic for Amiga is a QL emulator for the Commodore Amiga by Mark Swift. QDOS Classic for Amiga is closely related to QDOS Classic for Q40 by the same author. Freeware. Support from:

<http://pages.unisonfree.net/mswift/files/QZ/index.html>

Atari ST Systems

The best known QL emulators for the Atari ST computers are the hardware **ST-QL** and **QVME** cards. Originally designed by Futura Datasenter in Norway, these were more recently handled by Jochen Merz Software, though they are no longer available new.

QLem is an emulator in software for certain Atari ST machines, by Johan Klockars. V1.45Jx is the latest version. Freeware. May be downloaded from:

<http://www.devili.iki.fi/pub/emulators/Sinclair/QL/>

or from <http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/emu/index.html>

You may need the **QL2ST** software from the same place. v3.0 of this is an associated QL disk transfer utility for use with QLem. QL2ST has two

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functions - initialise disks in the Sinclair QL format and convert files from a QL format disk to a TOS file system.

Q40/Q60

These computers were advanced QL compatible computers designed by Peter Graf in Germany and supplied by D&D Systems in England. The Q40 came first, then the Q60 with a faster processor and other enhancements. Q40 and Q60 machines are normally shipped with their own version of SMSQ/E, but Mark Swift has ported QDOS Classic to the Q40 and Q60 machines (which are collectively referred to as Qx0 by most people). QDOS Classic for Q40/Q60 may be downloaded from my Q40 page:

<http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/qx0/index.html>

or from the official Q40 web site at:

www.q40.de .

QDOS classic, as the name implies, is an implementation of the traditional QL QDOS operating system rather than the SMSQ/E operating system.

There's also a version of Linux for Q40 and Q60 – look on Claus Graf's Q40 web site www.q40.de for further details.

The Other Way Round...

You can see from the above that QL emulators for other platforms are not in short supply. However, we often forget that there are some emulators which run on a QL which allow a QL to run software intended for other computers.

PC Conqueror

This system from Digital Precision let you run DOS programs at a reasonable speed on a QL system. Sadly, this is no longer available.

CP/M

Over the years several packages were available to allow the QL to run programs intended for the old business operating system, CP/M. Digital Precision offered one such system, while another came from Sandy UK. Neither is available now, but you may find the occasional second hand copy.

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ZX81

Sir Clive's original black wedge was the micro on which many of us cut our computing teeth. It still has its enthusiasts out there, and Dr Carlo Delhez gave us Xtricator, which lets us run a ZX81 on a QL. I don't know much about this, but you can download it from

www.dilwyn.uk6.net/zx81/index.html

along with some program images to run on the emulator if you fancy a trip back to early Sinclair computing days.

Spectrum

Several Spectrum emulators running on a QL have been available over the years and most of them are still available.

ZeXcel

Written by Davide Santachiara and Marco Ternelli . Now compatible with 65536 colours mode of QPC2, QXL, Q40 and Q60. ZeXcel is the first and only ZX emulator for the QL which makes full use of the extended environment and it is the only one which supports SMSQ/E 65536 colours mode. ZeXcel can be used with SMS2/SMSQ monochrome screen drivers too. It can emulate a Spectrum 128k +2 or a standard 48k ZX Spectrum with or without Interface 1 emulation. Zexcel can read Z80 snapshot files (so it is fully compatible with Z80, the PC Spectrum emulator written by Gerton Lunter) or ZTA tapefiles. The original Mode 4 and Mode 8 colours modes are still supported if 65k colours mode is not supported by your emulator or hardware. ZeXcel does not contain utilities to convert ZX tapes or discs into a suitable QL format (for that you will need ZM/128 or ZM/hT systems) - ZeXcel documentation, though complete, assumes you already know how to use ZTA or Z80 files. If you need a full tutorial this is included with ZM/128 or ZM/hT system. Please note you need the Extended Environment (or SMSQ/E) and Menu extensions to run ZeXcel. This version of ZeXcel is freeware. Download from

www.dilwyn.uk6.net/spectrum/index.html

ZM/128 & ZM/hT system

Spectrum 48k/128k emulators written by Davide Santachiara and Marco Ternelli. The ZM/hT system comprises: two Spectrum emulators, ZM/128 and ZM/hT; ZM/Accessories to convert Spectrum tapes/disks into a

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suitable format; 96 page manual. The ZM/128 system includes all the above stuff except the ZM/hT dynamic compiler - ZM/hT is a code compiler which converts Z80 machine code to 68000 instructions as it runs. Download from

www.dilwyn.uk6.net/spectrum/index.html

ZeXcel and ZM/128 & ZM/hT are also available from Davide Santachiara's Spectrum emulators web site at:

<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Park/6533/zxemulators.htm>

Spectator

Spectator is a Z80 Emulator in a 48k Sinclair ZX Spectrum environment, written for the Sinclair QL and its clones. The Z80Emulator is able to execute programs written in the Z80 machine code language. The ZX Spectrum environment includes the original ZX Spectrum ROM plus ZX Interface 1 ROM (edition 2) and additionally caters for "hardware compatibility" such as keyboard reading, screen output control and redirecting of signals originally heading for devices such as tape, Microdrive and RS232. Written by Dr Carlo Delhez. Download from

www.dilwyn.uk6.net/spectrum/index.html

Speculator

Speculator a freely distributable 48K ZX Spectrum emulator package for Qdos micros, written by William James, with help from Dave Barker, Simon N Goodwin, Mark J Swift & Dave Walker. Download from

www.dilwyn.uk6.net/spectrum/index.html

TOS4QL

TOSforQL is an emulator that allows certain programs written to run under the TOS operating systems on the Atari ST to be run under QDOS. The emulator works by intercepting calls to the TOS operating system and mapping them onto the equivalent QDOS operating system calls. Available to download from:

<http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/emu/index.html>

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CueShell	V2.14 EUR 29,90
CueShell for QPC	V2.14 EUR 20,00
SER Mouse software mouse driver for serial mice	EUR 10,00
EasyPTR Version 4	V4 EUR 59,90
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Cheques payable to Joachim Merz only!
Photo: via wild.com, 3th of April 2008

To encourage use of the Quanta Software Library in our Silver Jubilee year, we have decided to include an up to date copy of the Library Guide disk for all members with this magazine. To order disks from the software library, follow the instructions for ordering Library programs in your Member's Guide, which was circulated to members a few months ago. The ordering instructions were also printed in the Feb/March 2009 issue of the magazine, on page 48.



This Library Guide disk is for the same version of the library as the latest CD version described below.

Just LRUN the boot program from the disk and when it asks for the drive and directory name it's running from, just enter flp1_ if you are running it from floppy disk drive 1. Hard disk users can copy the Library Guide to a hard disk directory such as WIN1_LIBGUIDE_ and run the boot program from there, entering the full drive and directory path name. Both the boot program and the main Library Guide program will ask for this information as you start them.

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Library Submissions

If you have program submissions for the library, please send them to me. Submissions have been rather thin on the ground in recent times, so adding new material to the library would be a most welcome event! I am grateful to Alex Wells, who has acted in the capacity of Quality Controller in recent months.

Magazine Listings

I have created a new category in the library this month. This is a disk called ML 01 which contains magazine listings. At the moment, it contains listings from Steve Poole covering as far back as late 2005. Most of these are also available from the Quanta web site www.quanta.org.uk and click on the link to Members Area where you will find the zipped listings arranged by issue date. Or go direct to the page at

<http://www.quanta.org.uk/members/index.asp>

Members who have Internet access will find it quicker to get the listings from the Quanta web site (thanks Dan), while those without Internet access or who prefer to get the listings on disk from the library can now do so. The listings disk ML01 is also available on the library CD.

Library CD

At the time of writing, CD version 1.91 is available, the only difference from 1.90 being the addition of the magazine listings disk and some minor corrections to some of the library _doc files.

Online Library

This idea (putting the Quanta software library online for members only to download) is currently somewhat in abeyance while our webmaster continues to evaluate suitable content management systems to help us manage updating the web site. It is still my long term hope to put the library online for members to use, and I am continuing preparatory work until the new system is ready.

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REGULAR FEATURES

QUANTA NEWS

Dilwyn Jones

Q-emuLator News

Daniele Terdina has released a new version of Q-emuLator. Version 2.5 is available to download from:

<http://www.terdina.net/ql/winql.html>.

It has faster emulation (up to 15% faster CPU emulation), a new more Windows Vista friendly installer and many bug fixes and small compatibility improvements, including improved compatibility with SMSQ/E when using Aurora Video Card mode in the emulator. Changes have also been made to the debugger utility and also to improve compatibility in the QemuFast version of the emulator (which is also available from Daniele's web site).

QemuLator for Windows is shareware. Registration costs 40 US dollars from the Q-emuLator web site listed above (scroll down past the download link to the "Order Web Page" link). If you have already purchased QemuLator and been sent a registration code for an earlier version, it should still be valid for this and any new versions in the near future.

An unregistered QemuLator works at roughly standard QL speed with up to 384K RAM and comes with a "demo mode" with some nice graphical demos.

The "Expanded QL" registration gives you all the features of the basic version, but it also allows processor emulation to run incredibly fast compared to the original 68008 and it emulates more hardware found on QL expansion boards (up to 16MB RAM, 4 serial ports, 2 parallel ports, built-in RAM disk driver). The "Expanded QL" registration also adds an accelerated QDOS video driver and a "Level 2" QDOS file driver that allows recent QDOS programs to correctly access files and to use subdirectories. You'll be able to access QXL hard disk files, and if you have the Pointer Environment there's a mouse driver to allow you to use your mouse in QL PE programs. Other extras include a TCP/IP driver and quick loading of SuperBASIC programs.

It is recommended that you uninstall any old versions of the emulator before installing the new one.

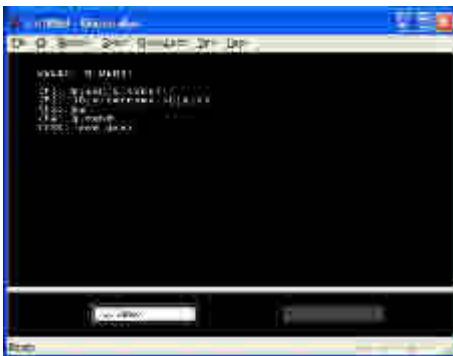
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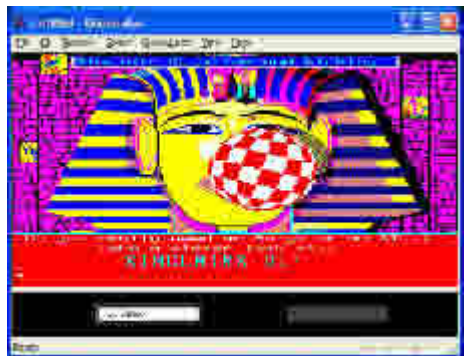
Q-emuLator web site



The Q-emuLator Setup Wizard



Selecting one of the demos



One of the graphical demos



Entering the registration code



Selecting "Original QL", "Demo Mode" or "Register" mode

QPC2, Linux and WINE.

Back in volume 25, issue 4 of Quanta magazine, Alex Wells reported on his attempts to get QPC2 running properly on a Linux system

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using the WINE software. Then, his major issue was trying “to stop Wine stealing the QL’s ALT key.”

Well, on 16th February he sent me a message to say he’d solved that particular issue and quoted the version details of his Linux and Wine:

“The QL "Alt-space" facility is working in QPC under Wine on Linux. A quantum leap!

Updated to Kubuntu 8.10
Using wine 1.0.1-Oubuntu2”

Gold Card Batteries



Italian QLer Davide Santachiara (pictured left) reported that according to his checks with the QL traders, the original batteries on board the Super Gold Card and standard Gold Card are no longer available, probably discontinued.

Thanks to Romaldo Parodi it seems that they have found similar batteries which in theory could be easily used to replace the original ones. At the time, Davide was unsure how these new batteries could be attached to the boards, then Tony Firshman stated that: “The +ve pin is labelled on the underside of the PCB. -ve is diagonally opposite, and the other two pins are not connected.”

If you need a replacement battery, get in touch with Davide at d.santachiara@libero.it

Text87Plus 4 Patch Update

Jochen Merz has let us know that Marcel Kilgus has fixed the problems reported with the ‘High Colour’ patch for Text87 Plus 4 (when used with QTyp spell checker for example). A V1.05 of plus4patch is available free of charge for registered users on

<http://updates.j-m-s.com/>

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QL On YouTube

Nice to see that QLers are taking advantage of modern web facilities like YouTube. Some of the Spanish QL users have put videos of the QL on YouTube to celebrate the 25th anniversary.

With thanks to Ralf Reköndt in Germany, here are the links to two of these videos about the QL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqOXsLIb3QQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0VGIRI3S-8>

Other QL videos you can watch include the Sinclair QL TV advert from 1984 (watch out for Sir Clive's "quantum leap"!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc3kGyYyqgQ>

Steve Reyal's QL DVD:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk35X8T4cZs>

Or Al Boehm's QL Midi demonstration:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8i1vPnfczQ>

Or Simon Goodwin using an Amiga QL emulator to transfer pictures from a Kodak digital camera to QDOS:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PglXh2r96ZU>

Or a brief video of Jim Hunkins demonstrating QDT:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pa439xg0i6g>

To find more QL videos, just go to www.youtube.com and search for "Sinclair QL".

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A sample screen shot of a QL video being displayed from YouTube.

SMSQ/E Registrar's Pages



Wolfgang Lenerz, the SMSQ/E Registrar.

Wolfgang Lenerz, the SMSQ/E Registrar - pictured left - reports that his SMSQ/E pages are back online after a short period of being unavailable following a server move. Among the problems he suffered was realising that his current server was case-sensitive, which among other things caused his download site to fail.

The official SMSQ/E sources site is at:

<http://www.scp-paulet-lenerz.com/smsgqe>

and his personal QL software downloads page can be found at:

<http://www.scp-paulet-lenerz.com/14mijk124/wolf/download/>

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QL In Personal Computer World

The current issue of Personal Computer World magazine

Kelvyn Taylor of Personal Computer World magazine kindly wrote to let me know that they will be publishing some material to celebrate the QL's 25th anniversary. They had been reminded about this by Urs König and decided to reprint the original QL review article from 1984, along with a new interview with QL hardware designer David Karlin. The issue involved is cover-dated April 2009 and available from late February.



The original cover of the 1984 review magazine



Out of interest, David Karlin left Sinclair when Amstrad bought the business. He now runs a web site called Bachtrack dealing with recording and classical music and has worked as a consultant with Tech Five. Have a look at www.bachtrack.com and you can read his blog at

<http://www.bachtrack.com/david-blog>

[Who's the CHUMP now? - Ed]

Q-Dict

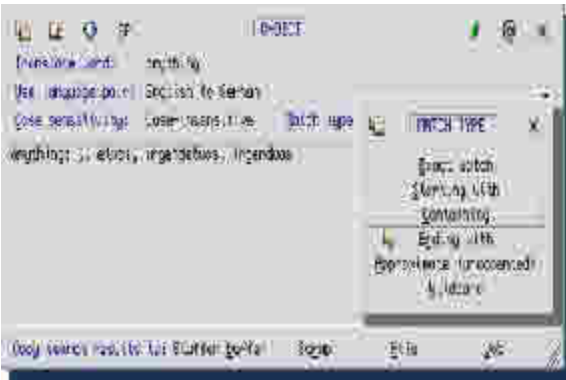
This new program from Dilwyn Jones works as an electronic dictionary. Using plain text dictionaries available on the Internet or dictionary files you have created yourself, the program can translate words for you, using a variety of search and matching rules.

The program is pointer driven and requires Window Manager 2 (which means a fairly recent SMSQ/E or QDOS with pointer environment version 2.00 or later. Toolkit 2 is also required, but that's pretty standard on modern systems. The program works in high colour modes and can use the System Palette colour theme.

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A number of configuration options are also available, such as which dictionary to use at startup. The program can use Wolfgang Lenerz's Home Directory thing if present.

Once you have searched for a word, the program lists any translations found and you can then optionally copy the results to stuffer buffer, Scrap clipboard, type into a job or copy to another file so that you can copy the dictionary search results to other programs, e.g. to a word processor.



Selecting the “match” type

The beauty of the system is that it can be a single language or language pair program – the program doesn't care if you are looking up the meanings of words or looking up a translation. You could use either an English-French dictionary, or just a good old English dictionary.

The dictionary format is really simple, if you wish to create your own or edit the ones supplied. It is just a plain text file, with entry and translation all on one line, separated by a colon character (or a TAB if you prefer). If you wish, the dictionaries can be loaded into a text editor to view instead of using this pointer driven front end. For example, here's a short extract from one of the dictionaries.

anchor: 1. ancre | 2. relâcher
anchovy: 1. anchois
ancient: 1. antique
and: 1. et

The program has a resizable display and can cope with quite wide lines of text as it left justifies the text output to its screen window.

Q-Dict is available to download free of charge (along with several other dictionaries and spell checker wordlists etc) from:

<http://www.dilwyn.uk6.net/diction/index.html>

Quanta THE FUTURE

THIRD WORLD LAPTOPS

Steve Poole

I have been looking at some of these projects, including the One Laptop Per Child scheme, which aims to develop and provide low cost laptops (target price \$100) for use by children in developing countries, for example.

There have been a number of articles about such computer systems, and during 2008 Amazon (the online retailer) had a scheme whereby you could purchase two of these XO laptops (as they are called) and one of the two would be donated to a child in a developing country, while you got the other one.

Sadly, that scheme has now ended, but I am still looking at whether there may be other such Buy-One-Give-One schemes, and whether there might be merit in purchasing some of these for our own use as QLers, since they use a Fedora-based Linux operating system and the promise in future of a cut-down version of Windows XP along the lines of some of the more expensive mini-notebooks now available. I am currently looking at whether I will be able to do a presentation on this subject at the Silver Jubilee event QL Is 25 in April.

You can find further details of the One Laptop Per Child project and of the computer itself at

<http://www.laptop.org>

The web site has details of the laptop's specification and a "mission statement" and you can get access to details of the people and companies involved as well.



A picture of the XO laptop

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Here's another picture along with a short list of features:

1. The “ears” are in fact twin antennae for wireless networking, and can also fold down to cover the connectors on the side.
2. Built-in microphone.
3. Backlit colour display, which also has a low power high resolution black and white mode for use in direct sunlight e.g. outdoors. The screen can rotate horizontally as well as up and down, at the centre joint.
4. One of two sets of four-direction cursor-control keys built into the display frame. These keys can be used when the screen is folded flat into handheld mode.
5. Portrait or landscape screen button.
6. External microphone and headphone/powered speaker socket plus one of 3 USB ports.
7. Dual mode touch pad (finger or stylus sensing)
8. Built in camera.
9. Built in stereo speakers.
10. The other game controller.



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(THE FUTURE OF QUANTA AND QL USERS)

An article by Duncan Neithercut in QUANTA Magazine Volume 25 Issue 6 expressed some concern over the future of QUANTA and QL Users. Obviously there is concern being shown by other QUANTA Members like Steve Poole who replied in Volume 26 Issue 1 with a 'Letter to the Editor' (Page 22). Whilst looking at The Future of the QL, it seems appropriate to publish the thoughts of two other members. If anyone would like to comment on this topic, you should send your thoughts to:

editor@quanta.org.uk

Letter to QL Today by Ian Burkinshaw [*Since this letter contains comments about QUANTA, Ian has kindly offered it to us too for inclusion in QUANTA Magazine - Ed*]

The Future for QLToday

Ian Burkinshaw

As I always do, I find QLToday a very good and useful magazine. The last issue Vol 13 issue 2 particularly so. QLToday may have published two articles that I have written one of which was spurred on by an article in that issue.

However the point of my letter is the future for the QL and QLToday. I was very interested in the points made by Jochen Merz and Roy Wood in Vol 13 Issue 2.

The fundamental issues as I see it are as follows:-

The numbers and types of users. We all know, we are now a very small group, a few hundred at most. These users fall into various groups. Users who use their QL systems for what I will call data processing. That is word processing, spreadsheets and databases. Some users do some SuperBASIC programming, that's me by the way. Also users who are into machine code programming. There are people who are QUANTA members and some who are QLToday subscribers, some subscribe to both and some users who do not subscribe to either.

I use my QL systems for what may be described as minority interests. I find SuperBASIC a good way to develop my applications for my own interests, such as radio receiver control, GPS decoding, electronic

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projects and model railways. I do a bit of PIC programming as well but mostly SuperBASIC.

The recent exchanges in QLToday and QUANTA magazine over things like Tony Firshman's reduction in his QL activities did no one any favours. At least QUANTA have sorted this one out now. It was a simple mistake that seems to have got out of hand. However the issues may be important to the people affected, but not to most members/subscribers. It is not what we pay our membership/subscriptions for. I hope we do not see much more like this in either QLToday or QUANTA magazine again. I have to say I just skip things like this. I doubt I am alone in doing this. So as far as to say this unfortunate exchange may cause some members/subscribers not to renew their memberships. So this then becomes a self fulfilling situation in the decline of our little community.

It is a shame, I have seen this so many times in small clubs and societies that seem to press the self destruct button with minor issues that get out of hand and people getting so possessive and lose sight of the bigger issues that are in everybody's interests. We must stop the bickering, since that will end it all forever. I also think this is one of the reasons people are reluctant to get involved with committees in general, not just QUANTA. The other issue, people these days just don't seem to have the time either, that's me as well. I will be the first one to put my hand up, I just wish there was more time to do things.

So what is the way forward? Well I think the time has come for QUANTA and QLToday to become one entity. Since the major contributors to both magazines are the same. This saves duplication. It would also save splitting the limited content across both publications. QUANTA has a problem with recruiting committee officers and more particularly the magazine editor, so this may help with this issue.

There is the question regarding the funds that QUANTA have. I do feel this should be used. Supporting hardware development is clearly not a going option, with so many people now using emulators. The costs are too great for the benefit for the members/subscribers. However the updating of The SBASIC/SuperBASIC Reference Manual and converting the Jan Jones, QL SuperBASIC handbook into PDF format should be undertaken. Taking the view it is not worth it, because there will be no return in the current state of affairs is not the way forward. What is the money for? If not for the benefit of the members. Yes it will make a loss, but there are a lot of users out there who have contributed a lot of money over the years, and

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frankly have not seen a lot in return. This would correct the balance. In this credit crunch time, people will be looking at their outgoings and things like QUANTA and QLToday will be high on the list of things that are not essential, or they may go with one and not the other. Either way we will lose more members/subscribers, just do not give them the excuse to cancel. The above idea would help in retaining members as well if they could see a return for their membership apart from the magazine. Which as we all know has been lacking. I am not blaming anybody here it is a fact of life. But we must look at other ways forward. Otherwise it will disappear very quickly. It would be good to include in The SBASIC/SuperBASIC reference manual all the QPTR and Qmenu keywords. I feel this would make it complete. Also other users, who do not have it, may purchase it with this additional information. The funds could be used not only to pay for this work but also subsidise purchases to all members/subscribers benefit.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Burkinshaw

G B LAMB
BANGKOK, THAILAND.
(full address supplied)

2009-02-03

JOHN MASON ESQ
CHAIRMAN QUANTA
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear John,

I have just received Volume 25, Issue 6 of QUANTA. I note that there is an article by Duncan Neithercut on THE FUTURE OF QUANTA. So that you know something of my background, I can tell you that I got my Wings in the RAFVR just before WWII, and flew in Coastal Command during the war, latterly looking for U-Boats in the dark. I am 94 years old.

I started off playing with a friend's APPLE computer in the early 80s. Our elder son joined a company in which he did computer programming in 1974, becoming in time a Systems Analyst. He is still in the same game at 68. By 1985 I thought that it was about time that I knew something about the subject in which our son was dealing and decided to buy a computer. A

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careful check around at that time of the various types available led me to purchase a QL. I taught myself to program in SuperBASIC and amongst others produced a program for printing lists of Prime Numbers including the first factors of the composites. I was very disappointed when Sir Clive Sinclair gave up on the machine.

A year or two later I decided that it was time to get into the PC game and bought one, getting into the Internet in 1993 with Netscape, which at that time was a very good program. I gave it up only at the end of last year.

I bought a disc to enable me to use my PC pretending it was a QL, but I have never made use of it, but I have continued to be a member of QUANTA since the early days. I haven't done any programming on my PC, but have used EXCEL very happily to produce some 300 drawings for my book on Magic Squares, which is to be published shortly.

My personal opinion is that the days of QUANTA are over. The QL was a marvellous machine when it was introduced, but today the PC and the Macintosh outdo it, and the quantity and quality of programs available for these machines put the QL in the far background. Why not let it pass away quietly?

It has been suggested that we should receive our QUANTA Magazines by email. I have ADOBE Reader. If I can receive it on my straight PC, will you send it to me by email. I hate to see the £1, 50. that it costs you in stamps.

Yours,
Gil.

[At the AGM in April, the committee will change. As Treasurer, I shall be staying on the new committee and I hope to continue to act on behalf of QUANTA Members during what is left of my term of office. It would be much easier for all of us if we knew what our members thoughts were. We are all most grateful for the above letters outlining the views of two of our members. Do you agree with them? Are these your views also? Please let us know and we will all do our best to act in the best interests of our membership as a whole. Without this feedback, we really are working in the dark. The answer to this is entirely in your hands. - Ed]

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QL MAGAZINES

Dilwyn Jones

Over the years, there have been a number of magazines about the QL. Some of these were commercial publications, some were user group magazines and some didn't even appear on paper! I thought that what with this being our Silver Jubilee year, I'd take a look at the magazines I remember most – this is mostly a collection of British-published magazines. Many more appeared abroad, published by the various national user groups in various countries, so this list is by no means exhaustive, although it might help with the nostalgia factor.

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First issue of Quanta newsletter.



Latest Issue of QUANTA Magazine

First off the mark with a regular publication were probably QUANTA. Leon Heller and Brian Pain had launched the Independent QL Users Group (or IQLUG, as QUANTA was known in those days) as soon as they were aware of the QL and the first issue bore the cover date of February 1984, the month after Sinclair officially launched the QL in a press conference at a London hotel. As we now know, the QLs were not shipped to customers until April 1984, so Leon and Brian were thinking ahead and the first newsletter contained only the proposed constitution for the group, an advance look at “Interesting SuperBASIC Features” based on preliminary documentation rather than hands on experience of a QL (concluding with the comment that “This is probably the best BASIC available on any computer!”), an article about ‘C’ programming, and an article about the 68008 processor.

QLUB



The first and last QLUB Newsletters



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Sinclair themselves issued a small magazine called the QLUB newsletter, QLUB standing for QL Users Bureau, in association with Psion (Trivia: Psion's name came from "Potter Scientific Instruments." after the company's founder David Potter. The acronym PSI was already in use elsewhere in the world so ON was added to make the name PSION unique. Source:Wikipedia). These were black and white magazines with photos and a number of interesting early articles. 9 issues were produced in all, the last issue published in late 1985 shortly after the price of the QL was reduced to £199. The first issue was a fairly simple typed affair with no pictures and laid out in the style of the QL manual. It proudly proclaimed that around 65% of QLers had joined QLUB, which was hardly surprising as membership didn't cost anything at first. The last issue contained a picture of the now rare Sinclair black dot matrix printer.

QL User



Early QL User editions

The first of the “news stand” magazines for the QL was QL User, published by EMAP Business and Computer Publications Ltd in London, and edited by Paul Coster BSc. The first copy I have is dated March 1984. In fact, at the time there were two titles of that name, the other published by SportsScene Specialist Press Ltd., which appeared initially as a supplement in Your Spectrum magazine. SportsScene was also associated with the Personal Computer World magazine which continues to this day under a different publisher – PCW recently published a copy of their review of the QL from their June 1984 edition (the infamous “Chimp Or Chump” cover picture of a chimpanzee sat behind a QL) and an interview with QL hardware designer David Karlin in their April 2009 issue. Given the sheer success of Spectrum sales, it was probably no surprise that publishers would jockey for position in the emerging market for Sinclair's newest and most ambitious computer to date. One of these issues of QL User had a brilliant cartoon on the cover, showing a whole street crying as a postman reveals his empty sack with no QLs in it. This was fairly typical of the fairly negative press Sinclair was receiving at the time over his reputation for launching unfinished products and late deliveries.

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These early commercial magazines were based more on advanced information about the machine rather than hands-on experience, although some journalists at the time had been invited behind the scenes to get some early hands-on experience of the QL and the bundled Psion software. Even those who got to play with a QL at best got a QL with a “kludge” (external EPROM board with unfinished operating system) and pre version 1 Psion software which did not give the best impression of the machine.



QL User's "Complete Dossier" in 66 pages

As the QLs started to trickle out to customers, the magazines developed and had more pages than the very slim early ones, which could not usually manage more than a few pages. Sportscene produced one issue of QL User in the summer of 1984 which was not part of Your Spectrum magazine and had 66 pages, but apart from that one issue it continued only as part of Your Spectrum magazine, usually as a pull-out section. The name "QL User" eventually became the domain of EMAP only and their first rather slim QL User had the cover date March 1984 and included a "full QL review", although nearly half that issue consisted of news of "rivals" to the QL and so on. Later in the summer, EMAP brought out larger issues which settled into regular publication schedules, initially bimonthly, and later monthly and consisted of about 50 to 60 pages.

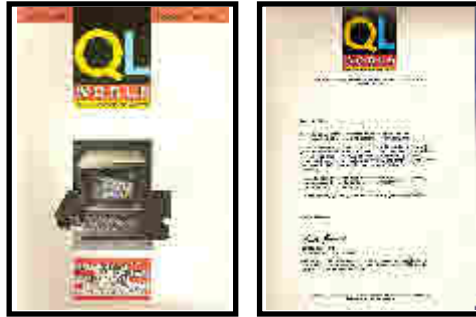


Early EMAP QL User magazines



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QL World



The first QL World and the letter to readers.

July 1985 saw the launch of a new and independent QL magazine called QL World, published by QL World Limited, the first 6 issues of which were sent out free with QLUB newsletter, and after that available by subscription. The magazine was edited by Geof Wheelright. Later on, QL User and the original QL World were merged under publisher Focus Investments Ltd, later Focus Magazines Ltd. The first merged issue bore the cover date March 1986 and like QL User had about 64 pages. The QL User name disappeared from the cover with the February 1987 issue. The December 1987 issue was the first to be edited by Helen Armstrong, who remained at the helm through several changes of ownership until the magazine later closed down. The May 1990 issue was the first under the new ownership of one of publisher Robert Maxwell's companies, MCM Ltd, after Focus Magazines went into administrative receivership. A brief period with Headway, Home and Law Publishing Ltd in 1992 was to lead to ownership of QL World passing to Arcwind Ltd. The May/June 1992 issue was the first under publisher Mark Kasproicz, still edited by Helen Armstrong. Then finally, just after Christmas 1993 it was announced in volume 3 issue 5 by Arcwind that this would be the last issue of Sinclair QL World. Some trivia: the last issue actually had the wrong details on the cover, Vol 3 Issue 4, and I had the dubious honour of "closing the door" as my advert was the last thing on the last page of the last QL World!



The last issue of QL World magazine

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Helen Armstrong wrote in the last issue: "I have been told that QL World must close with this issue. Heck of a way to celebrate the QL's 10th birthday and our own second year at Arcwind...Darn, and we've only got another two months to go on the New User Guide!"

S.U.B.



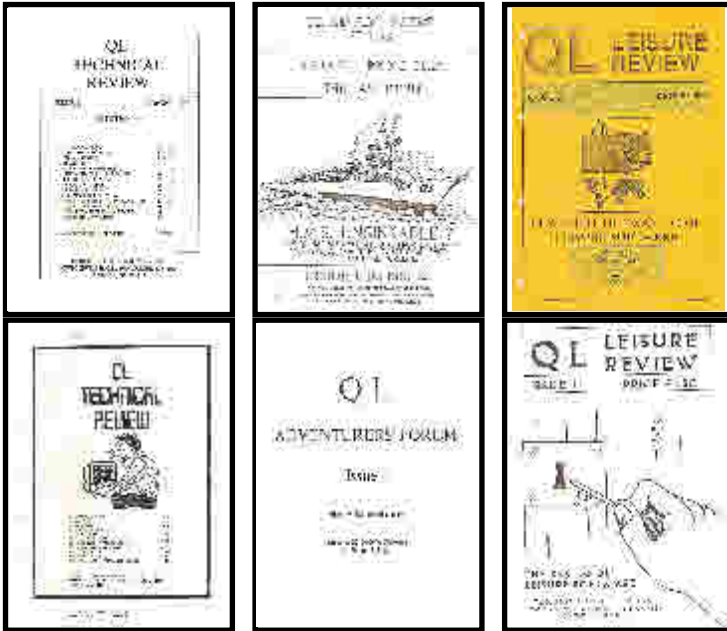
SUB's first issue (issue zero)

Richard and Julie Turner set up the Super User Bureau as a commercial support operation shortly after the Amstrad buyout of Sinclair's computer business. They sold software and hardware, ran a support line and published an occasional newsletter, starting interestingly enough for a computer company with issue zero! I think that only a further three issues were published and SUB eventually disappeared.

CGH Services Publications

CGH Services, a QL software company owned by Richard Alexander which had released a large amount of both commercial and PD software, had been publishing two magazines called QL Technical Review and QL Adventurer's Forum (later called QL Leisure Review). These were fairly simple photocopied affairs, but full of interesting articles. QL Technical Review was aimed mostly at programmers and contained a lot of technical information. 8 issues were published, ending in late 1992/early 1993. The QL Adventurer's Forum was (as the name implies) a magazine aimed at game players, focusing on adventure games mainly. 9 issues of this were published with the 9th issue proclaiming on its cover that it was "The Last Issue!". But this was only because the magazine was to change its focus and was soon relaunched as QL Leisure Review. As far as I know, only two issues of the QLLR magazines were ever published.

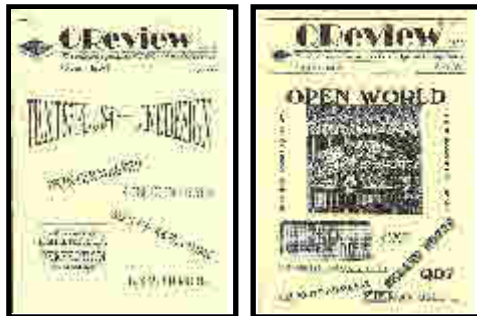
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QL Technical Review, QL Adventurers Forum and QL Leisure Review from CGH Services

QReview

QReview's first and last issues



When CGH Services closed, Bruce Nicholls (current owner of the QL Users Email Mailing List) started a magazine called Q-Review, published by his Quo Vadis Design company. As the name implies, this magazine focused largely on software and hardware reviews. QReview was eventually incorporated into IQLR and Bruce concentrated on QL software via his company Quo Vadis Design. Bruce also became the owner of the QL Users Email Mailing List in recent years, and is nowadays co-editor of QL Today magazine.

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International QL Report

International QL Report's
first and last issues



Over in America, publisher Bob Dyl Sr. at Seacoast Services had launched the International QL Report in 1991, which started off as a slim newsletter-style publication, mainly read by American QL users, but which quickly grew into a QL magazine in its own right.

With the eventual demise of Sinclair QL World, the International QL Report (IQLR) quickly became the main international QL magazine as its subscription base grew.

Eventually, ill health forced Bob Dyl to give up the magazine in 1996, after 5 volumes and 6 issues.

QL Today

First issue of
QL Today



At this point Jochen Merz in Germany decided that in order for the QL scene to remain viable, a new subscription based QL magazine would have to be produced. That magazine was called QL Today, and I was nominated as editor. The magazine was to be published bi-monthly, starting with a May/June 1996 issue and Jochen decided that issue 1 would need to be launched quickly, so my main contribution to that issue was a number of articles to get it off the ground, rather than editing the magazine as such. Little was I to know in those days that I would remain at the helm for nearly 10 years until Geoff Wicks was to step into the editor's chair! QL Today is still going, and now in its 13th year, the second longest running paper based QL magazine after Quanta.

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Local Group Magazines

A number of 'national' and 'local' QL user groups had sprung up throughout Europe, north America and Australia over the years. Many of these organisations had their own national magazine - QLCF in France had QL-Contact-France magazine, the Italian QL users group had Mondo-QL, Spanish, Dutch and German groups had their own newsletters, the Dutch organisation Sin_QL_Air producing Quasar for example, and some USA and Canadian groups had their own newsletters such as Sinc-Link in Toronto, Canada and Update magazine in the USA, for example. See cover pictures of Quasar magazine at



First issue of Quasar magazine, from the Netherlands

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~wij2/singlairuk.html>

Disk Based Magazines

Many organisations bypassed the paper stage and produced their newsletters on floppy disk, to produce so-called ezines. One of the first to do this was Ian Bruntlett, who produced such a magazine called Forum. As far as I know, only 3 issues were ever published, and you can still download copies of these for collections and nostalgia value at

<http://dilwynjones.topcities.com/forum/index.html>

Club QL International was (despite the name) a small, non-profit organisation run by Mike Kenneally, formed mainly as a self-help organisation for members. Disks and return postage were sent each month to Mike, with a contribution written by the member, which Mike then merged into a newsletter, nominally monthly though not always regular! Over 100 issues were made in all, including the 100th issue (pictured on the left) which was distributed as a cover disk by QL Today magazine to celebrate the centenary issue. What with the growth in online forums and mailing lists and so on, membership dwindled and the newsletters ceased in the early 2000's. Club QL's web site is still there on



<http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/vista/4807/>

and more of their newsletters are available from

<http://dilwynjones.topcities.com/clubql/index.html>

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The Italian and Spanish QL community produced a large number of magazines of their own on disk and these are still available to download today:

Italian:

The QItaly club, run by Eros Forenzi and Roberto Orlandi , released regular magazines. You can download some copies from:

<http://dilwynjones.topcities.com/qitaly/index.html>

Giorgio Garabello published a disk-based mag called Q-Italy, you can get some issues from

<http://dilwynjones.topcities.com/qlmag/index.html>

Spanish:

Various people have published several Spanish QL magazines, such as QLave, QLiper, and CuQ, which are available to download from Javier Guerra's Spanish QL Resources site:

<http://sinclairql.es/qlave.htm>

<http://sinclairql.es/qliper.htm>

<http://sinclairql.es/cuq.htm>

The QL Hacker's Journal was a free publication aimed at QL programmers, edited by Timothy Swenson in America. It started in January 1991 originally with a quarterly publishing schedule, and was mainly disk based, with a few issues being made available on paper. The QL Hacker's Journal is mainly aimed at programmers, and contains a variety of interesting and often little covered subjects, ranging from SuperBASIC to C - a diverse collection of articles in each issue.

Copies of the QL Hacker's Journal can be downloaded from Tim Swenson's Web site

<http://www.geocities.com/svenqhj/qhj.html>

Tim also produced a couple of issues of the Q40 Linux Journal available at

<http://www.geocities.com/svenqhj/q40lin.html>

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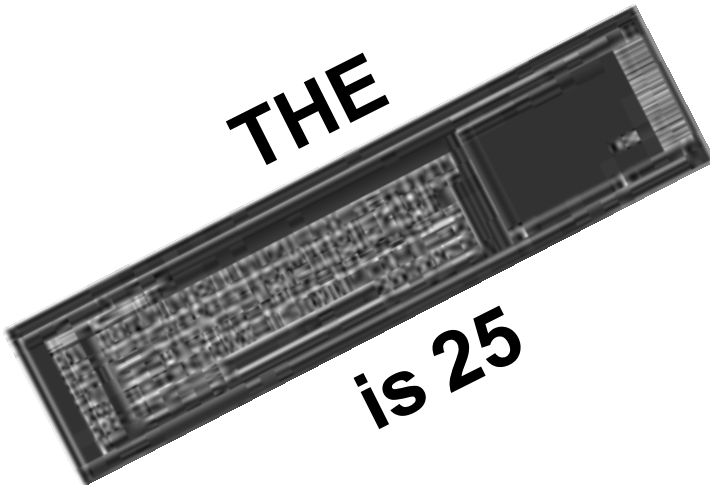


A rare printed edition of QL Hacker's Journal.

Here in the UK, the Scottish QL Users Group also published their own newsletters (in fact, they still do). You can see some sample issues on John Sadler's web site at

<http://www.ims1.supanet.com/SQLUG/intro.htm>

So you can see that over the years there have been quite a few QL-specific publications and you can still read some of these thanks to the efforts and dedication of webmasters who continue to make them available. The QL has now reached its silver jubilee and long may it continue!



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QUANTA SUBGROUP MEETINGS

THE WEST MIDLANDS QL USER GROUP

This long-running group has moved back to its previous venue, the Queens Head pub in the City Centre. Meetings remain open to Quanta members and non-members alike. The Queens Head is in Steelhouse Lane, Central Birmingham, four minutes walk from Snow Hill main-line railway station and has ample street parking nearby.

Meetings are usually on the first and third Monday of each month (but not on Bank holidays unless the previous one was cancelled for that reason). After your first meeting you're expected to pay £1 each time towards the organisation and monthly newsletter costs - except once a year when the group pays all those who attend a pound instead (We provide food twice a year for those who attend the AGM and the group's birthday party) and at meetings we discuss all sorts of things, QL-related and otherwise, usually from about 8:20 pm. onwards till 10:30 or later. The group owns QL hardware, a disk library and subscribes to relevant magazines. People can join the mailing list for £3.50 per year, even if they can't attend regularly.

The contact number is Mike Bedford White's, on 0121 605 4438, anytime after 11 am.

Email: mikebwhite@blueyonder.co.uk

QUANTA DORSET SUBGROUP

Meetings are held, on the second Sunday of each month at the Merley Community Centre in Harrier Drive, Merley, just south of Wimborne Minster. Time: 2.00 pm. to 5.00 pm. All are welcome.

John Meadows Tel: 01202 576189, or John Mason, 01425 275894.

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LONDON QL AND QUANTA GROUP

Meetings are held in the School Room, which is the basement of the Borough Welsh Congregational Chapel, 90, Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1. This is almost opposite the junction with Marshalsea Road, at the other end of which, 5 minutes walk away, is the Borough Underground Station. Free parking is easily available in Southwark Bridge Road for road users, Cyclists are welcome.

Members currently each pay a subscription of £30 per year towards the cost of the hire of the hall and a small additional charge is made for tea/coffee - biscuits are then provided free.

Please bring your QL equipment if possible, all types welcome, e.g., PC portable running emulators. The Group has some systems stored at the venue for its use. In addition, there are lots of donated second user equipment, books, magazines, etc, available for purchase.

Time: 2.00 pm. to 6.00 pm., on the second Sunday of the month.

No meetings are held in either December - winter break, or August summer break. Giving 10 meetings a year.

Malcolm Cadman: Tel: 020 8691 5780

email: QL@mcad.demon.co.uk

NEMQLUG - THE NORTH EAST MANCHESTER QL USER GROUP

Meetings are held at 181, Urmston Lane, Stretford, Manchester. M32 9EH (Near Junction 7 of M60 Motorway - Was Junction 7 M63 Motorway). Our informal meetings start at 7 p.m. and finish at 11 pm. All welcome.

Meets on the last Thursday of each month (except December).

John/Sarah Gilpin 0161-865 2872 (thegilpins@btopenworld.com)

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SCOTTISH QL USERS GROUP

SQLUG meets at George Gwilt's home every second Sunday in the month. Please contact George Gwilt before coming to get the location.

Geogwilt@aol.com

SOLENT SUBGROUP

Meets at Botley Market Hall, all welcome. Park at the back and use side entrance.

1st Saturday of the month from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm.

Graham Evans, Tel: 023 8040 3350.

SURREY QUANTA SUBGROUP (SQSG)

The group is currently trying other venues in the Leatherhead - Epsom area. If you plan to attend but do not get our emails, please phone or email Ken Bain for the latest location.

Meetings are 8.00 to 10.00 pm. On the last Wednesday of each month except December.

Ken Bain - 01932 - 347 432 (to midnight), kenb@bcs.org.uk

SUSSEX QL USER GROUP

Currently without a meeting place, anyone interested should contact Keith Mitchell or Roy Wood.

Roy Wood, 01273 430501 or Keith Mitchell, 01903 742263.

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ABOVE: Map showing Allesley and local main roads and motorways

BELOW: Map showing location of Allesley Hotel, Birmingham Road



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Allesley Coventry Hotel, Directions

If you are driving:

From **M42** North and South bound:

Take Junction 6 onto A45 for Coventry. Follow Directions 1

From **M6** South bound:

Take Junction 4 then A446 (Coventry A45) and then left onto A45 towards Coventry. Follow Directions 1

From **M6** North Bound

Leave at Junction 2. Follow A46 Coventry E&S. After 5 miles follow A45 Birmingham. Follow Directions 2

From **M1/M69** South bound:

Leave at Junction 21 onto M69 towards Coventry, at the end of the motorway follow A46 Coventry E & S. After 5 miles follow A45 Birmingham. Follow Directions 2

From **M25/M40** North bound:

From **M25** at Junction 16 follow M40 North to Junction 15. Follow signs to Coventry A46 and M69. Carry on approx 9 miles to slip road A45 Birmingham. Take left A45 towards Birmingham for approx 5 miles. Follow Direction 2.

From **M1** North bound:

Leave motorway at junction 17 onto M45. Follow M45 to end onto A45. Follow A45 towards Birmingham. Follow Directions 2.

From **Coventry City centre**:

Leave Ring road at Junction 8 signposted A4114 Allesley Village / A45 Birmingham. Follow main road past McDonalds to island. Take 3rd exit Allesley Village. The hotel is 150 yards on left.

Directions 1:

Follow dual carriageway towards Coventry approx. 6 miles. Turn left onto A4114 Brownshill Green/City Centre, take second exit to next roundabout then first left Allesley Village, the hotel is 150 yards on left.

Directions 2:

Continue along A45 past Sainsburys through long set of traffic lights. Turn off slip road A4114 Brownshill Green/City Centre. Take fourth exit.

At Next roundabout take first exit - Allesley Village.

The hotel is 150 yards on left.

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO ALLESLEY

The organisers of QUANTA's "QL is 25" Workshop and AGM are grateful to the editorial staff of QL Today for the additional information on Public Transport facilities in the Coventry area which was published in their Volume 13 Issue 2 Magazine as follows:

Neither QUANTA nor the hotel can provide advice for public transport users, but QL Today can. A bus stop to Coventry is directly opposite the hotel entrance and the bus stop from Coventry about 20 yards up the road. The service is fairly regular and the stops are serviced by buses 7 (not Sunday), 75 and 900. However in Coventry city centre you are on your own. Even QL Today could not trace the nearest bus stops to the railway station for these services. We advise you to try the web site: www.travelcoventry.co.uk/bus/index.asp This gives details of bus timetables and they are promising maps of the bus stops before long.

[We are also informed that public transport is readily available between Allesley and NEC in Birmingham and also Birmingham International Airport and although these services are regular they may not be very frequent during the weekends - maybe every hour. As above, check with the local transport web site for specific details. - Ed]

"One man does not see everything" - Euripides